AN INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

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An introduction to
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An Introduction to Shakespeare

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Foreword

For "younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disdain."—*All's Well that Ends Well*

History travels in spirals, approximately repeating itself; and, as the curve swings around, certain periods come closer together. So it has come to pass that this second quarter of the twentieth century is nearer to the last quarter of the sixteenth than to the last quarter of the nineteenth. In other words the present age is more Renaissance in spirit than Victorian, and Shakespeare is more nearly contemporary with modern youth than are Gladstone and Longfellow. This interesting situation makes imperative a revaluation of Shakespeare, a fresh judgment, not dictated by the Shakespeare idolatry of the early years of the nineteenth century nor by the realistic revolt of its last decade, but springing directly from the Elizabethan spirit of today. This new acquaintance with Shakespeare is already well under way in the theatre, where it is arousing the liveliest interest.

It is the purpose of this book to assist in such a revaluation on the part of readers, students, and teachers of Shakespeare.

All references to the text of the plays are to the *New Hudson* edition published by Ginn and Company, one play to the volume. In this edition the explanations

most necessary for the meaning and spirit of the lines are at the bottom of the page, where the reader may catch them as he goes on, with the least possible interruption. Other material of fact information and literary appreciation is gathered at the beginning of each volume, where it may be used for reference as desired.

The manual is intended for use in any class or group engaged in an introductory study of Shakespeare. In order to serve best the purpose for which it was planned, it should be in the hands of each student, to be used for class assignment and discussion with the teacher or group leader, and also as a handbook for reference throughout his study or reading of Shakespeare. Copies should be on the library shelves for the use of those who are doing Shakespeare's plays by themselves either as collateral reading for other courses or on their own initiative.

Besides using for discussion the suggestive questions at the end of each chapter, the teacher might assign the outlining of the chapters as a means of relating and digesting the material.

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An Introduction to Shakespeare

[I]

Why Study Shakespeare

We must either educate ourselves to enjoy new aspects of life or else give up the opportunities and, to that extent, admit ourselves failures.—JOHN ERSKINE

Reading Comprehension

Every high-school or college student, as he looks back over the progress of his own development, realizes that ability to read with understanding and appreciation is not a natural heritage but an acquired skill. Beyond mere literacy there are many degrees of reading comprehension to be achieved by practice and conscious effort, as skill is gained in swimming, tennis, music, mathematics, or any other field of attainment.

Most students in their ninth year in school are able to read with comprehension and enjoyment adventure stories, simple narrative poems, the daily newspaper, and some popular magazines. High-school seniors have progressed much further. They are able to read with pleasure and profit magazine articles on social and political questions and books of travel and biography. Furthermore, they have caught "glimpses that will make them less forlorn," visions of those rich and pleasant fields that we call literature. They have discerned a glimmer of truth in that saying of Dr. Johnson's,

"Whatever makes the past, the future, or the remote predominate over the present advances us in the dignity of thinking beings." And they have discovered that reading is the royal highway from the present and provincial to the past, the future, and the remote.

We are accustomed to hear people say, with easy cynicism, that the graduates of our schools and colleges never afterwards read the literature to which they have been introduced. But in the face of the fact that never before have publishers printed, bookshops sold, and libraries circulated so many editions, collections, and single copies of literary masterpieces, no one can reasonably deny that our schools and colleges are turning out thousands of readers whose demand for good reading is encouraging the production of excellent current literature as well as new editions of the best and most permanent of the works of the past.

Values in Literature

However, an even greater and more widespread development of reading comprehension is a consummation devoutly to be wished, for the individual and for society. Literary masterpieces, well read and adequately comprehended, are not only an unfailing source of mental recreation and pleasure but a potent influence for civilization. Everyone, not only teachers and students in the schools and colleges, but every adult whose mind is trained or can be self-trained to do it, should *study* occasionally some one of our great literary works for intellectual growth and mental experience. And through

the power thus gained he will find himself able to read, with ease and enjoyment and ever-increasing understanding, other books that otherwise would be forever beyond his mental grasp. The great writer is an artist, who interprets to us, as the painter does, the beauty and charm and significance of familiar things. He is the interpreter of life, through whose genius we see and understand, as we never could do unaided, the world of men and things; and through whose imagination and spiritual vision we are lifted to heights beyond the natural world, where great truths become clearer, and we almost have sight of "what God and man is."

Values in Shakespeare

This broadening and enrichment of our mental and spiritual experience we find supremely in Shakespeare. He pictured the black despair of guilty men and he "babbled of green fields." He plumbed the depths of evil and suffering, and he is "sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child." Birds and flowers, imps and fairies, ghosts and monsters, clowns, alewives, lovely ladies, kings and scholars, loyal fools and treacherous murderers crowd his pages—"Here is God's plenty."

Nature in Shakespeare

No writings up to Shakespeare's time and none since, not even the poetry of Wordsworth, are so rich in knowledge and appreciation of the familiar natural world. The little boy wandering in the fields and woods

about Stratford and playing in the meadows along the Avon must have had an alert mind, wide-open eyes, and a tremendous interest in what he saw about him. Casually and incidentally, as one speaks of that with which one is thoroughly familiar, he has mentioned by name in his various writings about sixty kinds of birds, twenty-eight kinds of fish, seventeen insects, sixty or more other animals, and about one hundred and fifty plants and flowers! Mentioned! How inadequate a word to convey the charm of such lines as these:

> Morning roses newly washed with dew.
>
> *The Taming of the Shrew*

> There is pansies, that's for thoughts.—*Hamlet*

> I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
> Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.
>
> *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

> The crimson drops in the bottom of a cowslip.
>
> *Cymbeline*

> I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.
>
> *As You Like It*

> There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
>
> *Hamlet*

> Here's flowers for you;
> Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
> The marigold that goes to bed with the sun,
> And with him rises, weeping; these are flowers
> Of middle summer.—*The Winter's Tale*

. . . daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.—*Ibid.*

For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and savour all the winter long.—*Ibid.*

These are not species in the catalogue of the botanist but flowers that "paint the meadows with delight," old friends, lovingly mentioned, whose very names sound pleasantly in the ear.

In many other lines there is the same affectionate and intimate observation of near and familiar things:

A red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle.
A Midsummer Night's Dream

As patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclosed.—*Hamlet*

Far off mountains turned into clouds.
A Midsummer Night's Dream

And then the moon, like to a silver bow,
New-bent in heaven.—*Ibid.*

The ousel cock so black of hue
With orange-tawney bill.—*Ibid.*

The cat with eyne of burning coal.—*Pericles*

And crickets sing at the oven's mouth.—*Ibid.*

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge.
The Winter's Tale

Look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground to hear our conference.
Much Ado about Nothing

He who learns through Shakespeare this loving interest in the world of natural things finds a new joy in living; and he who finds in Shakespeare his own love of nature expressed so aptly and beautifully that his heart thrills with responsive pleasure has found a new joy in reading.

Language in Shakespeare

Misquoting for our purpose Johnson's famous remark about Addison, we might say that whoever wishes to cultivate a mastery of language, to handle words and phrases in infinite variety with ease and vigor, should give his days and nights to the study of Shakespeare. It is a *real* language that he speaks, gained not only from the best writings of his time but from Bill the butcher's boy and the country folk up in Warwickshire, with new-coined slang from Bohemian London and graceful expressions of courtly speech from his intimacy with nobles and scholars.

Shakespeare uses fifteen thousand different words, more than twice as many as Milton, three times as many as great novelists like Thackeray, and ten times as many as the ordinary fairly educated person. But it is not so much the size of his vocabulary that matters as the fact that under his hand words glow with life and vitalize the printed page with beauty, melody, humor, pathos, tenderness, homely force, or whatever other effect he chooses to produce.

Note the moving simplicity of Antonio's farewell speech to his friend Bassanio:

> Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;

the effective combination of Latin and Saxon when Macbeth despairs of cleansing the blood from his hands:

> . . . No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red;

the delicate lyric charm of such lines as these found in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

> Who is Sylvia? What is she?
> That all our swains commend her;

the inexplicable beauty of Hamlet's last speech to Horatio before his death:

> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story;

and, in *King John*, the heart-rending pathos of the childish plea of the little boy Arthur to his torturers:

> Have you the heart? When your head did but ache
> I knit my handkercher about your brows,—
> The best I had, a princess wrought it me,—
> And I did never ask it you again.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Nay, hear me, Hubert, drive these men away,
> And I will sit as quiet as a lamb;
> I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,
> Nor look upon the iron angrily.
> Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
> Whatever torment you do put me to.

On the other hand, Queen Margaret's curse upon her husband's murderers and Lear's invectives against his cruel daughters chill one's very marrow. And in language worthy of any Billingsgate fishwife Kent stigmatizes Oswald as "A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking, whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable, finical rogue; . . ."

Shakespeare is the least literary of all the Elizabethan dramatists, but no one can read attentively and appreciatively a single one of his plays without adding to his own mastery of language and without gaining a new and joyful comprehension of language expression as an *art*.

Interpretation of Life

If "the proper study of mankind is man," then surely one must study the plays of Shakespeare, for he is the supreme interpreter of humanity in all ages and places. We are accustomed to say that it was Scott who first put color and reality into the portrayal of past ages, but more than two centuries before Scott Shakespeare made history live. It must be admitted that he lacked Scott's antiquarian accuracy as well as his precision in other external details. He never made a long journey on horseback, as Scott did, to prove that a certain distance could be traversed in the time assigned to it in his story. He did not even make the trip from Verona to Milan to discover that it should be done by land and not by water! Nor did he send out a ship to determine whether

Bohemia had a seacoast. He supplied Bohemia with a seacoast, and he supplied the Romans with cannon, striking clocks, dressing gowns with pockets, and books with pages that could be turned down. Nevertheless, so thoroughly alive are his Romans and so human are their actions and motives that from Shakespeare's story and not from the account of any learned historian the great majority of people have derived their impression of the assassination of Cæsar.

It was through Shakespeare's dramatizations also that many an Elizabethan came to know his own past history and to realize his great national figures, Prince Hal, Richard III, Wolsey, Hotspur, and all the rest, as living beings, faced with vital human problems, and meeting them, as human beings do, with reckless energy or misplaced loyalty or criminal cunning or straightforward heroism.

Shakespeare is the great interpreter not only of preceding ages but of the life of his own day. Nearly all the plays, even those which deal with remote places and improbable plots, are full of interesting allusions to minor current events and to local and contemporary customs, such as the planting of red wheat in early autumn in Cotswold, the racing of greyhounds for which the same district was famed, the success of companies of boy actors, the Latin taught in the grammar schools, the new map showing the East Indies, the visit of the Persian embassy to London, and hawking, hunting, sheep-shearing, "wakes, fairs, and bear-baitings." In a few instances the dramatist even mentions persons and families by their real name. William Visor of Womcote

and Clement Perkes of Stinchcombe Hill, whose names occur in *2 Henry IV*, are listed in the official records of those districts and so is Marian Hacket of Wincot, at whose tavern the tinker in *The Taming of the Shrew* runs up a score. *The Tempest* is founded upon the shipwreck of Sir George Somers and his fleet upon the hitherto unknown Bermuda Islands in 1609, a contemporary event which created much excitement in London when the survivors returned in the following year.

Not in such allusions to external details, however, lies Shakespeare's claim to the title of the great interpreter of his age, but in the completeness of his portrayal of humanity in his time. We see as in a magic mirror all Elizabethan England. We realize what kind of people these were, how they thought and felt and acted. We understand their exuberance of life with its varied elements, love of fun and horseplay, jovial drunkenness, hearty, robust coarseness in speech and conduct, mingled in the same scenes and sometimes in the same persons with dignity, nobility, delicate refinement, and subtle wit. No dramatist, ancient or modern, no novelist, and only Browning among the poets can be compared with Shakespeare in the *range* of his human sympathy. He understands and reveals the inner natures of men of all classes and—what is much more remarkable—of women of all classes in sixteenth-century England.

But, as his friend Ben Jonson declares, "He is not for an age but for all time." His Greeks and Romans are Greeks and Romans; his Elizabethans are Elizabethans; but they are modern Englishmen and Amer-

icans and Frenchmen too, for are they not men? Shakespeare has not, like many other writers, merely exhibited the fashions and foibles, vices and virtues, of his own age, but he has revealed the deepest and most permanent truths of human nature. Here and now in the world there are Banquos and Macbeths in politics; Lears and Gonerils in families; Malvolios and Falstaffs in society; and Hamlets living subjectively in an objective world.

Why, then, may we not secure our knowledge of human nature first-hand from the people about us instead of on the "base authority from others' books"?[1] Because most of us are not *seers* in our own right. We lack the wisdom, the breadth of sympathetic understanding, to see human actions and motives and the consequences thereof in relation to eternal verities. Such vision is the gift of genius. Shakespeare is not a propagandist nor a moralist; in fact, in the person of Polonius, he holds the typical moralist up to ridicule. But, probably without being quite conscious of it himself, he has the transcendent gift of interpreting life "sub specie aeternitatis" and of revealing behind the confusion of scattered facts, phenomena, and events the eternal truths of human experience.

Is there a man who is so sure of the rightness of his own standards that he tries to force them upon all the rest of the world, thinking to himself, "Because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale"?[2] Is there one who will sacrifice his integrity to gain a

[1] *Love's Labour's Lost*, I, i.
[2] *Twelfth Night*, II, iii.

selfish material success; or one who rails and rages under suffering unjustly thrust upon him; or one who sentimentally utters moral precepts while his life is full of meanness and malice? Let him see in Shakespeare's characters his own shortcomings and through this great interpreter of life attain to a larger morality and sanity and sense of eternal values. It is not too much to say that no one who sees life whole through Shakespeare's lens can be quite petty, bigoted, pessimistic, or misanthropic; nor can he, in his general attitude towards life, be immoral or irreligious. This is the most cogent of all reasons for studying Shakespeare and surely it is reason enough; but still another deserves consideration.

The Influence of Shakespeare

For more than a century Shakespeare has deeply influenced the writers of all civilized countries. Goethe, the master mind of German literature, declares, "I do not remember that any book or any person or event in my life ever made so great an impression on me as the plays of Shakespeare." Lessing, Schlegel, and Heine; Voltaire, Jusserand, and Victor Hugo; Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Lamb, Coleridge, and Swinburne; Emerson and Lowell; in short, all the greatest writers since his time have studied Shakespeare, have written about him, and have been profoundly affected by him.

His influence upon the theatre is seen in the fact that his plays have been translated into a greater number of different languages than any other book in the world except the Bible. In Germany before the war about

twenty-five of the plays were frequently acted in from eight hundred to nine hundred performances a year. Almost every play has been presented in Russia, and sixteen are regularly performed in Poland. Mr. William Archer is authority for the statement that of about four hundred plays produced between 1580 and 1640, only twenty survive today on the English-speaking stage, and all twenty are Shakespeare's. That playwrights of the present day owe much to Shakespeare is inevitable. Though his influence is mainly, perhaps, unconscious, potential, traditional, it is sometimes direct and obvious, as in St. John Ervine's recent drama *The Lady of Belmont*; and in Barrie's charming play *Dear Brutus*, in which the title and theme are derived from *Julius Cæsar*, while the main character as well as the time and place are reminiscent of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Mr. Louis C. Elson, a leading authority on the history of music, has written: "No man (not a professional musician) ever inspired as much or one-quarter as much music as Shakespeare has done." *The Tempest* has been used fourteen times as the book of an opera,—in German, French, Russian, and Italian! From *The Merry Wives of Windsor* have come eight operas, the best of which is Verdi's *Falstaff*. Verdi's *Otello* is one of the greatest operas of the modern Italian school. *Romeo and Juliet* has been the inspiration of seventeen operas besides innumerable other orchestral settings. Tschaikowsky's *Romeo and Juliet* overture is among his best works. Berlioz, a diligent student of Shakespeare, has produced two of the finest pieces from this

source, the symphony from *Romeo and Juliet* and the overture *Le Roi Lear*. From *Macbeth* there are several overtures besides Strauss's symphonic poem, and everybody knows Mendelssohn's music on the *Midsummer Night's Dream*,—the dainty, humorous overture and the famous wedding march. To list and describe all the pieces of music derived from Shakespeare would require a volume. In the field of art his influence is hardly less remarkable; several thousand paintings, drawings, statues, and bas-reliefs by artists all over the civilized world have been inspired by scenes in Shakespeare's plays.

Naturally enough, however, Shakespeare's greatest influence is upon the people of his own blood and language. His thoughts have become a part of the thinking of every English-speaking person, and his phrases are on every tongue. Even one who has never read a single play of Shakespeare's echoes his ideas and repeats his lines, though the speaker may be as unconscious of it as was the old lady who, upon hearing a performance of *Hamlet*, criticized the play on the ground that it was "only a lot of quotations." In some cases Shakespeare has merely provided a particularly apt and clever expression of a commonplace truth; but sometimes he has contributed the thought itself, which, fitted perfectly to the right words and constantly repeated, has become a part of the mental content of successive generations down to the present.

Lend me your ears.

To be or not to be; that is the question.

Brevity is the soul of wit.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

Screw your courage to the sticking-place.

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.

We are such stuff as dreams are made of.

To thine own self be true . . .

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep.

All the world's a stage.

He hath eaten me out of house and home.

'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be.

My cake is dough.

The crack of doom.

The law's delay.

The insolence of office.

At one fell swoop.

The king's English.

Curses, not loud but deep.

Neither rhyme nor reason.

Thereby hangs a tale.

Elbow-room.

In the twinkling of an eye.

Benedick, the married man.

Single blessedness.

The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns.

. . . that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains.

These are only a few, chosen almost at random, of the hundreds of quotations that prove the impress of the great Elizabethan upon current thought and speech. This influence in the United States is due not merely nor mainly to the importation from English literature of Shakespeare as a "classic," but it descends directly from the early settlers in America. Shakespeare is the heritage of America as well as of England. The first colonists left England when Shakespeare's plays were at the height of their popularity. In 1630, when Boston was settled, the first complete edition had been in print for seven years, and Shakespeare's phrases and characters were familiar to all classes. In fact, many Elizabethan words and idioms now obsolete in England have been preserved in common speech in America. It may even be said that in some respects, notably in its pungency and vigor, its tendency to metaphor, and its free coinage of new words, the development of the language in America has been more Shakespearian than it has been in England. Says one critic: "There is no part of the world today where the study of Shakespeare is so active and where the interest in his work is so wide-

spread . . . Homer was not better known in Athens. In a democracy still young and widely separated from older nations and cultures Shakespeare has become one of the links that bind the American public not only to the common inheritances of the English-speaking races, but to the traditional culture of Europe."[1] Can any American be considered really educated if he is ignorant of those writings which have brought international fame to the English language and which for three centuries have affected so powerfully the thought and culture of the world?

Shakespeare and the Critics

Occasionally some outspoken young person will declare: "I have tried to read some of Shakespeare's plays, and I cannot find in them any reasonable basis for his tremendous influence nor for the enthusiasm of the critics. I honestly believe that most of this praise of Shakespeare is 'parrot talk'; that, because it has become traditional to praise Shakespeare, admirers have read into his plays virtues and values that are not there." Let it be admitted at the outset that there is truth in this accusation. Since many people are not independent thinkers, there is bound to be much "parrot talk" about every interesting subject from Shakespeare to modern novels and current politics. It is true, also, that hero-worship is a quality inherent in human nature; that just as prejudice may result in malice so all-pervading that it can see no good whatever in its object,

[1] Neilson, W. A., and Thorndike, A. H., *Facts about Shakespeare.*

so admiration may run to extravagance and even to obsession, which can see no fault in the person admired. Such unbalanced appreciations have been written of Shakespeare as they have been written of Washington, Napoleon, Joan of Arc, Rudyard Kipling, and most other great personages. They are not taken seriously for very long, however. Vogues of admiration may come and go, but no reputation lasts and steadily increases for three hundred years, withstanding alike the scientific scrutiny of scholarship and the sophisticated skepticism of modern thought, unless it is very solidly based. Some of the qualities which constitute the basis of this admiration of Shakespeare have been suggested in the preceding pages. He is, in the deepest sense, one of the world's most valued possessions.

But *is* the reputation of Shakespeare still supreme? Are his works respected and admired by independent "modernistic" critics? Up to the present time the question must be answered indisputably and almost unqualifiedly in the affirmative. No modern critic, not even one of the "smart" group, who take the opposite side in order to be thought original, has yet challenged the supremacy of Shakespeare in any important point. The nearest to an iconoclastic criticism is that of Bernard Shaw, who says: "We are growing out of Shakespeare . . . He is nothing but a household pet." But Shaw cannot forbear adding, "His characters still live; his word pictures of woodland and wayside still give us a bank holiday breath of country air; his verse still charms us; his sublimities still stir us; the commonplaces of wisdom which age and experience bring to

all of us are still expressed by him better than by anybody else . . . He writes plays better than most modern dramatists."

Shakespeare and the Public

Does Shakespeare still command the interest of the public as well as the respect of the critics? This is an age of play-writing. Scores of good new plays in French, Russian, Hungarian, Scandinavian, and other languages are clamoring for production; yet, with this vigorous competition, hardly a season passes in any civilized country without the appearance of some of Shakespeare's plays. In America the few actors now living who have the ability and training to perform Shakespearian rôles play to crowded houses. In almost every season also other managers undertake presentations of Shakespeare's plays which, however much they may come short of artistic perfection, are undeniably successful from the point of view of popularity as shown by the box-office receipts. Actors look upon the performance of Shakespearian parts as a high achievement in their profession. It is still true that just as every officer in Napoleon's army is reported to have carried a marshal's baton in his pocket, so every ambitious actor carries a copy of *Hamlet*. Our popular American family of actors, John, Lionel, and Ethel Barrymore, have all essayed Shakespearian rôles. The outstanding theatrical events of the past few years, those which have excited the greatest popular interest and enthusiasm, are the Gordon Craig production of *Macbeth*, George Arliss's portrayal of Shylock in *The Merchant*

of Venice, and the tour of the Stratford-on-Avon players with a Shakespeare repertory. The *Theatre Magazine* of a recent date, picked up by chance at a news stand, proved to contain two articles on Shakespeare besides a full-page picture of Miss Margaret Anglin in the rôle of Lady Macbeth and an announcement that a production of *Macbeth* was to be one of the features of that theatrical season.

For the reading public new editions of Shakespeare are constantly being made, and thousands of copies of his works are sold by bookshops and circulated by libraries. Dr. Georg Brandes, a famous Danish writer, affirms: "It is three hundred years since his genius attained its development; yet Europe is still busied with him as with a contemporary. His dramas are acted and read wherever civilization extends." Within the last few years a collection of nine plays of Shakespeare published in 1619 was sold for one hundred thousand dollars. This book is the only copy known of the first collected edition of Shakespeare's works, which was published in London by Thomas Pavier. The volume at one time belonged to Edward Gwynne. It was bought by Marsden J. Perry in 1902.

It seems there is no gainsaying the fact that neither modern taste, competition, criticism and skepticism, nor even the attempts of fantastic thinkers to deny his authorship and to dispute his very existence have dislodged the great Elizabethan from his secure position at the head of all literature. If our skeptic admits that all this is interesting and almost convincing but insists that he himself cannot find in the plays anything to

account for such a reputation, he brings us back to the thought at the beginning of the chapter. The reading of Shakespeare presents peculiar difficulties, which one must *study* to master. In the next chapter, then, let us see what some of the difficulties are and how one's reading comprehension may be enlarged and strengthened to overcome them.

Suggestive Questions

1. Does your own observation and experience support the author's statements about reading comprehension?

2. At what stage is your own reading comprehension, elementary or advanced? What types of literature are you able to read?

3. Give four reasons for studying Shakespeare. Which appeals to you the most? Can you think of other good reasons?

4. Give your opinion as to the truth of these statements:

a. To understand life we need only observe the people about us and read the daily newspapers.

b. The American people read little, and that little is mostly trash.

c. It would be a good thing for everybody, young and old, to study a few pieces of good literature every year.

d. "Whatever makes the past, the future, or the remote predominate over the present advances us in the dignity of thinking beings."—Dr. Samuel Johnson.

[II]

How to Study Shakespeare

'Tis the good reader that makes the good book.—EMERSON

It needs wit to know wit.—Old Proverb

Difficulties in Reading Shakespeare

The most difficult of all types of literature to read is the drama. The reader of a novel finds situations explained, characters and motives analyzed, scenes and persons described in more or less detail. The reader of the drama finds only conversation. To be sure, the present-day dramatist, consciously writing a play to be read, may provide detailed introductions and stage directions; but Elizabethan drama, never meant to be read, is almost wholly dialogue, the few stage directions having been mostly written in by the prompter in the theatre. The reader's imagination must do the work of actor, director, costume designer, and property man—by no means a simple task. It is true that there are people who delight in Shakespeare's plays by a kind of spontaneous, intuitive appreciation, doubtless because they have an unusual endowment of imagination and poetic sensibility and perhaps a naturally Elizabethan temperament. Theirs is, however, an emotional rather than an intelligent appreciation. They feel, respond to,

and are stimulated by the genius of the plays without understanding them. Most of us find that appreciation of drama, especially of metrical drama, requires a high degree of reading ability. Elizabethan plays, in particular, are further obscured by time; for words, idioms, local allusions, taken as a matter of course by the Elizabethan audience, must be explained to the modern reader in footnotes, just as current literature will have to be annotated for readers of the future if, perchance, any of it is so fortunate as to survive several centuries. Consequently, many people cannot read Shakespeare for the same reason that they cannot swim—because they have never learned.

How then shall the student approach his undertaking, for it is an undertaking to the ordinary youth, though a most interesting and compensating one? There is a group of theorists who maintain that literature should never be studied but only *read* for entertainment. Effort, they say, is painful in itself and destroys one's pleasure in what should be pure enjoyment. It would be just as reasonable to declare that the tennis player should not exert himself but return only those balls that land within easy reach, because effort will destroy his enjoyment of the game. If effort in itself were painful, who would ever swim in the surf or climb mountains or play the violin? Mental effort may be more fatiguing to some, but the recompense is correspondingly greater in mental strength and enrichment and in the exhilaration of seeing in an apparently obscure passage "something rare . . . rush to knowledge."[1]

[1] *The Winter's Tale*, III, i.

Before starting on the play itself, the student should acquire enough general information about the works and the age which produced them to give him the right approach to his subject. Without this he is sure to fall into perplexity and confusion. Here are the main things which he needs to know:

First, he should not feel that he has to admire everything that he finds in the plays. Shakespeare, like all great men, developed slowly, constantly improving in his art through practice and experience. In his earlier plays it must be admitted that at times "the text is foolish"; there are trivial, insignificant, redundant lines, inferior rhymed verses, and poorly built plots. The student should not feel disappointed or bewildered upon encountering such faults, but should look beyond them to the qualities which make even these earlier plays superior not only to contemporary drama but to most of the drama of all ages. In some cases, also, what appear to be faults or trivialities on the printed page disappear in the acting. Redundancy, for example, and repetitions in verbal play may be tiresome to read but they are genuinely funny in rapid dialogue and are frequently used in comedy today.

Shakespeare and Modern Standards

In addition to some obvious faults, there are elements in Shakespeare's plays that must not be judged by modern standards but must be understood as characteristics of his age. The modern reader is repelled by the violence and bloodshed of some of the tragedies, the

unspeakable cruelties in *Titus Andronicus*, and the horrible scene in *King Lear* where Gloucester's eyes are put out. But we must remember that humaneness is a comparatively recent element in civilization. Many years later than Shakespeare's time the citizens of London flocked to see men drawn and quartered for petty crimes or even for the misfortune of being in the political minority. The real explanation of such scenes, however, lies in the fact that the "tragedy of blood," brought to a climax in the *Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd, had come to be a popular type of play before Shakespeare. The taste of the Elizabethan audience demanded atrocious crimes and gruesome revenges. In *Titus Andronicus*, one of Shakespeare's earliest tragedies, he follows the prevailing fashion. Later he takes over the old play *Hamlet*, written originally by Kyd as a story of blood and horror, and elevates it into the realm of psychology, philosophy, and noblest poetry. He is a super-Elizabethan, but he is an Elizabethan and must be understood as such.

Another marked influence in forming the taste of the Elizabethan public was that of John Lyly, who through his prose romance, *Euphues*, established in popularity an artificial style of writing characterized by alliteration, balance, contrast, far-fetched similes, and allusions to fabulous birds and beasts. This verbal juggling was much admired by the Elizabethan audience. Several elaborate passages in *Love's Labour's Lost* and even in *The Merchant of Venice* and later plays are evidence that Shakespeare is again following the fashion, writing what was "modern" style in his day. In spite

of the judgments of cultivated taste something in human nature still responds to this "fine language" of the Elizabethans and still more to the passages of sentimental rhetoric like the patriotic speeches of Richard II and Henry V and the mercy speech of Portia.

With all its labored artificiality euphuism at its best contributed a real refinement of expression, which Elizabethan dramatic writing greatly needed. The freedom of speech customary at that time seems to the modern reader unnecessarily vulgar and offensive, especially when it is found not only in the lines of clowns and drunkards but in those of princesses and court ladies. Again we must make due allowance for differences in taste. Hearty, robust, unselfconscious coarseness of speech, though it may be startling and displeasing to modern taste, is not entirely unwholesome, and it was used then by all classes in varying degree much as slang is used now. Innuendo and profanity were perhaps hardly more frequent in Elizabethan than in modern drama.

Some sober and practical readers will find another stumblingblock to enjoyment of Shakespeare in the improbabilities and inconsistencies of some of the plots. We are accustomed to read plays or novels mainly for the story. The Elizabethans knew many of the stories already (as we know beforehand the stories on which our operas are based), and they liked them wild and improbable. We do not demand that the plots of musical comedies be convincing; neither did the Elizabethans demand logical consistency in their romantic comedies. *As You Like It* is "a thing of beauty" and "a joy for-

ever," a source of delight to hundreds of thousands of readers and audiences in spite of a ridiculously improbable plot. It does not follow because Shakespeare adopted the prevailing fashion that he is not a skillful plot maker. Further discussion of his handling of plots will be found in Chapter VI.

Reading Shakespeare with Penetration and Imagination

With the ground thus cleared of the chief possibilities of misunderstanding and false judgment let the student turn to the play itself; for, after all, "the play's the thing" and not somebody else's interpretation of it. From the very first stage direction he should read with an eye that *sees* not "words, words, words" but the scenes and persons they describe. The student of the history of literature will probably try to see the costuming and stage pictures as they were on the Elizabethan stage; the casual reader may prefer to free his imagination from any such restrictions; sometimes it is interesting to picture the scenes from the point of view of an audience in a present-day theatre. For example, the curtain rises on a room in Portia's house; the reader sees behind the printed words a reception hall in the home of a wealthy Italian lady of the Renaissance period, a room richly and artistically furnished. There is a "flourish of cornets," as thrilling to an audience now as it was then. Next comes the processional entrance of Portia and the Prince of Morocco, "and their trains," splendidly costumed, a study in rich colors.

By all means the student must read pictorially or he will miss some wonderful spectacular effects—fireworks, processions, pantomimes, and dances. In spite of the absurdity of trying to represent armies on the stage, an absurdity which the Elizabethan playwrights themselves recognized and ridiculed, a most beautiful and impressive stage picture of the forces of Richmond and Gloucester, armies with banners, was produced in a recent performance of *Richard III*. Those who have witnessed the breathless interest of audiences in the dumb shows of *Emperor Jones* and other recent plays will realize how effective on the modern stage might be "a show of eight kings, the last with a glass in his hand; Banquo's ghost following"[1]—a stage direction usually passed over by the student with little attention.

The stage pictures in Shakespeare's plays have given the inspiration for many fine works of art, such as the painting by Sir Edwin Abbey, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, portraying that moment in *King Lear* expressed by the stage direction in Scene i of the first act: "Exeunt all but France, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia."

Not only must the large spectacular scenes be visualized, but also such smaller details as gestures, facial expression, and the bits of business implied in the lines. The reader must see in his mind's eye the nimble fools, mowing and capering; the sleepy little boy Lucius entering at the tent door, rubbing his eyes, and later falling asleep over his lute; and Perdita

[1] *Macbeth*, IV, i.

"Love well our father; . . . So, farewell to you both." (*King Lear, I, i*)

From a painting by Sir Edwin Abbey

prettily handing out flower favors to her guests at the sheep-shearing fiesta. Much light is thrown upon the scene between Hamlet and Ophelia in Act III, Scene i, if the reader imagines that at about line 103 Hamlet catches sight of Polonius hiding behind the arras and frames the speeches which follow for the benefit of the eavesdroppers. In Act II, Scene ii, when the first player follows Polonius off the stage, Hamlet's words (line 530), "Look you, mock him not," probably indicate that the player has introduced some interesting "business" by mimicking the old man's waddling gait.

A recent edition of Shakespeare[1] supplies the text with abundant stage directions. For example, the following bit of dialogue from *The Tempest*, usually printed with no stage directions, appears thus:

PROSPERO (*Imperatively, to* FERDINAND.)
Follow me!
(*To* MIRANDA.)
Speak not for him; he's a traitor.
(*To* FERDINAND.)
Come,
I'll manacle thy neck and feet together.
. . . Put thy sword up, traitor,
. . . . . .
For I can here disarm thee with this stick.
MIRANDA (*Plucking his mantle.*)
Sir, have pity.

For such help some young students will perhaps be grateful, but those who have learned to read Shake-

[1] *The New Shakespeare*, edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John D. Wilson. Published by The Macmillan Company.

speare will probably prefer to furnish the stage business from their own imagination.

So far we have considered the necessity of visualizing things actually occurring on the stage, whether they be grand spectacles or small details of action. But there are some lovely little pictures, too, in incidental allusions in the speeches. The student should read the play often enough and sometimes slowly enough to get details usually passed over in the first reading. It would be a pity to miss seeing the "red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle"; "the ship boring the moon with her mainmast"; Queen Mab

> No bigger than an agate stone
> On the forefinger of an alderman;

dainty Ariel, flying through the air on a bat's back or lying "under the blossom that hangs on the bough"; and scores of other fascinating pictures that furnish one of the chief joys in reading Shakespeare. Here the good reader has the advantage over the auditor in the theatre, for in the rapid movement of the play the listener has no time to realize the beauty of such lines unless he is already familiar with them.

Students sometimes ask, "Why, then, did Shakespeare, writing for a popular audience, with no idea that his plays would ever be read in print, put into them subtleties of description, of poetry, of characterization that would not be appreciated or even noticed by the majority of his hearers?" One answer is that the Elizabethan audience probably caught more of these subtleties than we realize, for two reasons: the actors speak-

ing from a stage projecting almost halfway across the pit and surrounded by the audience on three sides could be seen and heard much more plainly than in a modern theatre; and the Elizabethans, not being readers, were quicker to catch the spoken word, just as modern moving-picture audiences are quick to catch the significance of the slightest movement of an actor on the screen.

A better answer, however, is that Shakespeare was not merely a commercial playwright but a genuine artist and a great creative genius working for his own artistic satisfaction and self-expression as well as for the pleasure of his audience. So there was plenty to satisfy both the groundlings in the pit and the cultivated gentlemen in the galleries, and more besides, spontaneously and unpremeditatedly poured into his work out of the riches of his marvelous mind.

Sensing the Music of Shakespeare's Plays

The student must not only visualize; he must also *listen*. One of the most popular elements in the Shakespearian plays in their own day was the music in them, —an element which the reader hardly realizes. Even the public playhouses had their musicians, and in the private theatres orchestras paid for the privilege of performing, in the hope of thereby securing wealthy patrons. For supernatural visions there was solemn music; for fairies and witches there were songs and chants; Hamlet plays the recorder; *Twelfth Night* opens with music, which continues through a part of the

Duke's opening speech. Soft music and the song accompany Bassanio's choice of the casket; in *The Winter's Tale*, in addition to a number of songs, there are the dance of the satyrs and the dance of the shepherds and shepherdesses. *The Tempest* is so full of music that one musician declares that it is "already almost an opera." Samuel Pepys, hearing the play in 1667, was much taken with the "curious musique," which he pronounced "mighty pretty." And the next day he "took pleasure to learn the tune of the seaman's dance." There were doubtless many in the Elizabethan audiences like the clown in *The Winter's Tale* who "grew so in love with the wenches' song that he would not stir his pettitoes till he had both tune and words."

It is much to ask of a reader that he imagine all this musical accompaniment, but happy is the reader who can. He who cannot may console himself with the thought that the real genius of the plays, so far as they appeal to the ear, lies, after all, not in such musical decoration, but in the melody of the lines themselves. No one has ever equaled Shakespeare in his masterly handling of the rhythmic movement of blank verse, nor in the grace and delicacy of the metrical effects in his lyrics. To this he adds the gift of welding vowel and consonant sounds with meter and meaning to produce such perfect lines as:

> Absent thee from felicity awhile,

and

> . . . Duncan is in his grave;
> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

Doubtless some part of the attraction of the verse lies in the quaintness of the old-fashioned language. Antonio's speech, for example, at the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice* is full of old idioms that fall quaintly and charmingly on the ear.

> In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
> It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
> But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
> What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
> I am to learn;
> And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
> That I have much ado to know myself.

By all means the reader must not miss what an alert and sensitive *ear* can contribute to his appreciation of Shakespeare's plays.

Recreating Shakespeare's Thoughts

Sometimes, however, the words and phrases are obsolete, and then the language becomes a source of perplexity rather than of charm. There is no denying the fact that the constant occurrence of unintelligible words and idioms is a decided drawback to the enjoyment of reading. In some cases the context indicates the meaning; in others judicious conjecture will suffice; and still others may be passed over as unimportant. But many words must be looked up as the reading proceeds. For example, notice the opening lines of *Cymbeline*:

> You do not meet a man but frowns: our bloods
> Not more obey the heavens than our courtiers
> Still seem as does the King.

Until the reader knows the prevailing superstition regarding the influence of 'the heavens' upon the characters and temperaments of men and until he discovers the old meaning of 'bloods' and of that still-recurring word 'still,' he is puzzled at the apparent obscurity of the passage.

However, the difficulties of the Elizabethan language are less formidable than they appear at first, for the student soon becomes accustomed to certain words and idioms that constantly recur. To acquaint himself with a few of these at the start will expedite his progress:

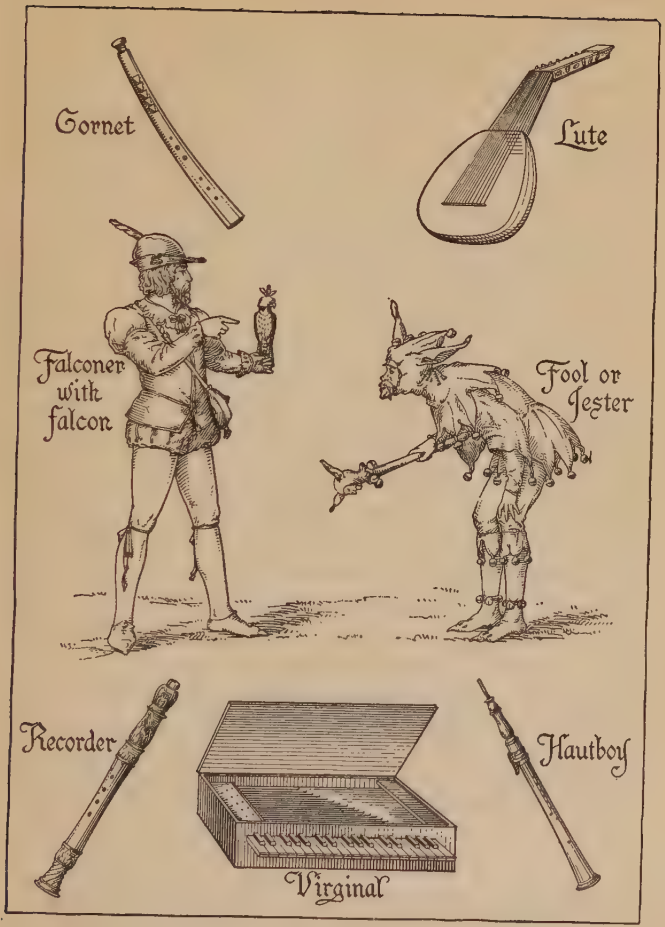
'a	he
addition	title
admiration	wonder
advice	reflection, consideration
censure	opinion, judgment
clip	embrace, surround
dear	near, close
ecstasy	uncontrolled feeling, pleasant or unpleasant; madness
envy	malice, hatred
fond	foolish
flourish	decoration; a showy musical passage, fanfare
gear	affair, business
hautboy	oboe
humor	moisture; character, disposition
jump with	agree with
marry	exclamation from name of the Virgin Mary
moiety	half; equal portion
possess	inform
prefer	recommend
preferment	promotion
pregnant	clever, ready

question	converse, discuss
reason	converse
sennet	a set of notes on the trumpet or cornet
sennight	seven nights; a week
still	always
stomach	inclination; appetite; courage; sometimes anger
vulgar	pertaining to the common people; ordinary, public.

The young student should not concern himself with grammatical forms and variant text readings, but he should not fail to get the plain meaning of every passage.

In all reading a background of general information is a great asset. The more the student brings to his book the more he gets from it. Knowledge is power in reading. The reader whose mind is furnished with a good vocabulary and some general knowledge of history, mythology, music, and almost everything else, when he starts to explore new realms of literature, finds that he already speaks the language. Take, as one example from hundreds that could be given, the line "still virginalling upon his palm."[1] The student who, from his general reading or from a study of the history of music, happens to know about the old musical instrument called the virginal, has the satisfaction of catching the meaning of this metaphor from his own knowledge without consulting a long footnote. Again, note in Rosalind's farewell to the audience in the epilogue of *As You Like It* this statement: "If I were a woman, I

[1] *The Winter's Tale*, I, i.


Cornet
Lute
Falconer with falcon
Fool or Jester
Recorder
Hautboy
Virginal

would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleas'd me." The meaning and humor of these words can be enjoyed only by those who realize that women's parts on the Elizabethan stage were always played by boys, and that young gallants of this period had the fashion of wearing beards cut, sometimes in fantastic shapes, to suit the face of the wearer or express his individuality.

All the writings of the Renaissance are crowded with classical allusions. In fact, intelligent reading in almost any period requires a fair knowledge of classical mythology and literature. Without this knowledge the student may be able to grasp vaguely the spirit and atmosphere of such passages, for example, as the last act of *The Merchant of Venice*, but he cannot be said to have an intelligent appreciation of what he is reading. Troilus, Cressida, Venus, Phœbus, Hector, Hercules, Dido, Jason, Achilles, and dozens of other gods, goddesses, and heroes must be familiar figures in his mind. The reader who brings the most to the book by way of general knowledge is the one who gets the most out of it in pleasure and understanding.

Again, the observant reader feels all the joy of the discoverer when by himself he comes upon some vivid or cleverly turned phrase; for example, Cordelia's exclamation after the aged, helpless Lear has been turned out into the storm,

> Mine enemy's dog
> Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
> Against my fire;[1]

[1] *King Lear*, IV, vii.

or the words of the clown in *Twelfth Night*, charging the Duke with changeableness, "Thy mind is a very opal."[1] He will note that Antony and Cleopatra "kissed away kingdoms";[2] and that Guildenstern and his friend, when asked how they fared, replied, "On Fortune's cap we are not the very button."[3] The thoughtful reader will always enjoy the bits of wisdom and philosophy scattered through the plays, some of them old ideas so aptly expressed as to challenge attention, some new enough to be thought-provoking, some surprisingly modern. The newest schools of therapy declare that one may "creep into the jaundice by being peevish"[4] and that in Lady Macbeth's case "more needs she the divine than the physician."[5] Whether there is any art that can "find the mind's construction in the face"[6] is still being argued by opposing factions, the preponderance of evidence being in favor of Duncan's pronouncement. The dramatist speaks of "these most brisk and giddy-pacèd times"[7] quite in the modern way.

> O, he hath kept an evil diet long,
> And overmuch consum'd his royal person[8]

sounds surprisingly in accord with modern practices; and note the up-to-dateness of this:

> . . . How sour sweet music is
> When time is broke.[9]

[1] *Twelfth Night*, II, iv.
[2] *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, x.
[3] *Hamlet*, II, ii.
[4] *The Merchant of Venice*, I, i.
[5] *Macbeth*, V, i.
[6] *Macbeth*, I, iv.
[7] *Twelfth Night*, II, iv.
[8] *Richard III*, I, i.
[9] *Richard II*, V, v.

The following are other examples of the hundreds of interesting aphorisms:

> Nought's had, all's spent,
> Where our desire is got without content.[1]
>
> There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.[2]
>
> As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods;
> They kill us for their sport.[3]
>
> Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.[4]

All the world loves a story, and if the inexperienced reader at first seeks mainly that, he is not to be censured, provided his imagination is active enough to get from the lines a really good story, full of color, sound, action, and life. In a second reading he will notice many of these small details of thought and phrase, and with still further study he will find the pleasure and profit of reading much enhanced by the development of some literary judgment. He will begin to enjoy not only the sheer entertainment of the tale but the skillful interweaving of plots, the alternation of scenes of tragic strain with those of pleasant or humorous relief, the use of dialogue to convey information to the audience, the management of suspense and climax,—in short all the various evidences of literary art and theatrical craftsmanship (see Chapter VI). All this is included in intelligent or intellectual appreciation of a Shakespearian play.

[1] *Macbeth*, III, ii.
[2] *Hamlet*, V, ii.
[3] *King Lear*, IV, i.
[4] *Macbeth*, III, ii.

Reading with Emotional Response

All really great literature conveys to the heart more than can be grasped by the intellect. The good reader, then, besides being imaginatively alert and intellectually active, must be emotionally sensitive and responsive. This does not mean that he should be sentimental over the romantic or tragic situations, but that he should respond to the feelings of the characters because they are genuine feelings; because they are not incidental to the particular time, place, or situation, but universal in human experience. The situations may be artificial and the setting and atmosphere Elizabethan, but the passions of the characters are human and timeless. The wrath and yearning pity of Cordelia when her helpless old father is cruelly treated become, vicariously, an emotional experience of the reader. There is nothing cold or austere about Shakespeare's plays. They are emotionally full, warm, and rich; and the responsive reader finds himself experiencing the whole range of emotions: tenderness, amusement, "pity and terror," anger, fear, and, not least important of all, laughter and jollity, for Shakespeare's people have a huge sense of fun.

When all is said and done, if the eye has seen, the ear has heard, the mind has apprehended, and the heart has responded, then the reading of a Shakespearian play has been a wonderful education. It has opened to the reader a new world, undreamed of in his limited experience.

Suggestive Questions

1. If you have hitherto been unsuccessful in your attempts to enjoy the reading of Shakespeare's plays, what do you think was the reason?

2. What is the meaning of the statement, "Knowledge is power in reading"?

3. Discuss the truth or falsity of these statements:

a. Literature should be merely read, not studied; study kills the reader's interest.

b. Great works of literature may have great faults.

c. Shakespeare wrote for himself as well as for his audience.

4. Give from memory or find other particularly pungent and quotable lines from Shakespeare. Find other examples of surprisingly "modern" lines.

[III]

Shakespeare's Times

Ah, what a life were this!—*3 Henry VI*
The spacious times of great Elizabeth.—TENNYSON

The Renaissance

That amazing manifestation of life and literature that we call the Elizabethan Age was brought about by a combination of causes, which in the preceding period had convulsed Europe and given all the nations a fresh start. Chief among these causes were the discovery of America, the religious reformation, the invention of printing, and the revival of learning. One of the particular features of the revival of letters was enthusiastic admiration of the newly discovered Greek and Latin writings and the conviction that the moderns could never hope to equal the ancients in literary power. This tendency was counteracted by the discovery of America. The knowledge of the existence of a new world loosened the fetters of the authority and diminished the importance of the ancients. It even seemed to dwarf their greatness by showing to what a small corner of the earth's surface they had been confined and how ignorant they had been of the world in which they dwelt.

The religious reformation—not only the Protestant

movement led by Martin Luther, but the Catholic reformation under such leaders as Savonarola—had tolled the knell of mediæval ecclesiasticism. It shook Europe from one end to the other and roused each individual from mental stupor and servile acquiescence to intellectual freedom and inquiry. It put into operation more vigorously than they had ever existed before in the history of the world the three agencies that make civilization: inspirational, illuminating knowledge of the past, daily increasing discoveries about the present, and the free exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information through the agency of the newly invented printing press.

In England this intellectual awakening, known as the Renaissance, was at its height in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Oxford and Cambridge universities were the centers of the new learning. Some of it, naturally, became mere dilettantism. Young gentlemen made "the grand tour" of the European countries, studying languages, and returned lisping in foreign accents and preferring every country to their own. But a genuine enthusiasm for learning prevailed; scholars spent joyous days and nights poring over Greek and Latin manuscripts or the more recent literature of Italy and France. The discoveries of such men as Copernicus and Galileo had opened up great vistas of new scientific truth. Many a zealous student exclaimed, as did Sir Francis Bacon, "I have taken all knowledge for my province!"

The fires of religious persecution were dying down. England had triumphed over her most formidable enemy and was beginning to lay claim to the title

"Mistress of the Seas." Explorations were made and colonies established in the New World. Trade routes were opened to India. Visions of stately galleons, "dipping through the tropics" with cargoes of pearls and diamonds, of "ivory and apes and peacocks," fired the imaginations of Englishmen. Gallant adventurers, some of them pirates, roamed the seas. It was an age which in intellectual and commercial activity, daring, and brilliancy has never been surpassed.

Life in England in Shakespeare's Time

The people were still divided into classes: the various ranks of the nobility, the gentry, the yeomen, the burgesses, and the common people; but the distinctions were less marked than before. There were many "new gentlemen." Anyone who was a student of distinction or a captain in the wars or who benefited the commonwealth by good counsel given at home could, for the payment of a sum of money, have a coat of arms bestowed upon him, provided he lived without manual labor and was able to bear the charges of a gentleman. Yeomen, farmers of their own lands, also rose in social importance. They often farmed, also, the squires' fields or bought the properties of unthrifty gentlemen. They frequented the markets, became rich, kept servants, and sent their sons to the university and the Inns of the Court.

Business was transacted at weekly markets and at great fairs on festivals and holy days. One of the most notable, the Stourbridge Fair, held during the last

three weeks in September, was proclaimed by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge and the mayor of the town, accompanied by members of Parliament and aldermen in grand procession. A scarlet-cloaked crier with his "O yez, O yez, O yez," ordered silence, commanded all vagrant or unruly persons to withdraw, and bade the bakers, brewers, and others to sell good victuals, ending with "God Save the King." The largest booths, those of the wholesale clothiers and woolen manufacturers, constituted "the Duddery." In the center of the Duddery square was a Maypole capped by a vane, and also a pulpit from which the minister of Barnwell preached on the two Sundays during the fair. There were puppet shows, rope dancers, horse races, and foot races.

Trade increased enormously. Skilled workmen, driven out of France and Flanders by religious persecution, brought to England the secrets of their industries. Great merchant trading companies carried on trade with foreign countries and enjoyed monopolies by royal grant. Many laws were designed to encourage the various industries; for example, in order to promote cap-making everyone below a certain rank had to wear a cap or submit to a fine.

Many of the beautiful homes of England were built during this period of prosperity. A few of the great nobles still lived in the old feudal castles; but these, with their moats and walls and narrow embrasures instead of windows, had been rendered obsolete by the invention of gunpowder. So the Elizabethan mansions were built with many windows and wide staircases. "You shall have sometimes," Lord Bacon complained,

"your houses so full of glass that we cannot tell where to come to be out of the sun or the cold." The manor houses and the homes of the yeomen were often architectural gems. The cottages of Stratford and the villages close by were half-timbered brick-and-plaster houses, with thatched gable roofs, latticed windows, and pretty gardens at the back and sides. Within doors, as well, a greater degree of comfort and convenience prevailed. Instead of open hearths there were fireplaces with large chimneys; cupboards were numerous and convenient; forks were coming into use; and bedsteads were beginning to take the place of straw mattresses spread on the floor. As indicated in his will, written in 1556, Shakespeare's grandfather, Richard Arden, had only one bedstead in the house where he lived with his seven daughters. Shakespeare apparently, as his will implies, had at least two for a much smaller family. Comforts hitherto unknown even in the castles of nobles were being brought into the homes of the middle class.

In this age of unparalleled prosperity there were, nevertheless, many beggars and vagabonds. This condition was in part due to the destruction of the monasteries earlier in the century. The monks had provided well for laborers and tenants on their farms. Some of these, now unemployed, became minstrels, peddlers, jugglers, or fortune tellers; some became robbers. It is reported that the magistrates of Somersetshire caught a hundred "sturdy beggars" at one stroke, hanged fifty at one time, and then entered a complaint because they had to wait until the assizes to hang the rest.

That the age prided itself on its ferociousness must

be remembered in order to understand many incidents in the plays of Shakespeare and other Elizabethans. The robust brutality of Regan's comment on Gloucester's blindness, "Thrust him out at gates and let him *smell* his way to Dover," is quite in keeping with the spirit of the times. Slitting of nostrils, cutting off ears or hands, and branding with a hot iron were common punishments. Hanging was the usual penalty for witchcraft, forgery, stealing sheep, taking horses into Scotland, and other offenses. Women who spoke their minds to tyrannical or drunken husbands were forced to submit to the indignities of the ducking stool or the branks. A dishonest butcher might be forced to ride a horse with his face to the tail and his bad meat in front of him on his way to the public pillory or the stocks, where his head or his feet would be locked in a wooden frame. More barbarous punishments were inflicted for attempts on the life of the sovereign and other serious crimes. Yet England did not practice the hideous cruelties of some European countries. In spite of the severity of punishments there was much lawlessness. At the shout of "Clubs, clubs," mobs of riotous youths would collect in the narrow streets of London, apprentices of one trade fighting against those of another. Tavern knights, like Falstaff, singing noisy songs, might draw rapier and dagger at a moment's provocation.

The inns and taverns of England were havens to the traveler of Shakespeare's day. Fynes Moryson, writing in his *Itinerary* in 1617, only a year after Shakespeare's death, after praising the comforts of the inns, says, "A man cannot more freely command at home in his own

House, than he may do in his Inn; and at parting, if he give some few pence to the Chamberlain and Ostler, they wish him a happy journey." An inn that has become immortal is the Mermaid Tavern in London, which stood at the corner of Bread Street, where the bakers congregated, and Friday Street with its fishshops. It was at this inn that the poets and wits of London assembled. Here Shakespeare met Ben Jonson, Sir Walter Raleigh, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, and a host of others—perhaps the most brilliant galaxy in history.

The Merrie England of Shakespeare's Day

England was indeed Merrie England in the sixteenth century. On May Days and other festivals boys and girls tripped about on the village green, although the Puritans railed against dancing. One of their writers, Philip Stubbs, called it "the noble science of heathen divelrie." English country dances became popular in all the courts of Europe. They were really contra-dances, the partners standing opposite each other, as in Sir Roger de Coverley. High leaping and stately movements were admired. It is said that Queen Elizabeth was complimented upon her high dancing.

Three or four times a year feasts known as "church ales" were held in the parish houses. There were dancing, bowling, and archery contests. The proceeds were devoted to the assistance of the poor or some other worthy object. At the holiday seasons feasts were held to which the poor were invited, and many rich men kept open house.

The country squire played cards, checkers, and chess. He had his billiard table and his bowling green. In almost every town and village there were butts for archery. Athletic contests were popular. But football, even in this virile age, seemed to have excited some disapproval. "For as concerning football playing," Philip Stubbs writes, "I protest unto you it may rather be called a friendly kind of fight than a play or recreation; a bloody and murdering practice, than a fellowly sport or pastime." In the earlier part of the century Sir Thomas Elyot had written: "There is nothing therein but beastly furie, whereof proceedeth hurt, and consequently rancour and malice do remaine with them that be wounded." Cock fighting, tennis, fencing, riding, tilting, coursing with greyhounds, and especially hunting and falconry were popular among the nobility. The queen sometimes entertained ambassadors with bear-baiting and bull-baiting.

The costumes of all the people, regardless of class, were as elaborate and costly as the purse could buy. It might have been said of many a young baron of England, "I think he bought his doubtlet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany." Men "wore a manor on their backs." The style called for long, close-fitting hose, short, full trunks, and a jacket or shirt, called a doublet because it was made originally of a double thickness of the cloth. Over the doublets were worn Italian, French, Spanish, or Dutch cloaks according to the prevailing fashion. Men and women wore a three-piled ruff, starched or wired. Starch, which was yellowish, not white, was introduced during this period

and won its way to popularity in spite of the opposition of the Puritans, who called it "the devil's liquor." Hats had high crowns, or low crowns and a wide brim. The brightly colored feathers that adorned them were sometimes a yard long. Men wore their hair either short or long, usually curled. Their beards were cut in various shapes to suit their faces. They wore boots with spreading tops or high-heeled slippers, in which they walked with mincing steps. Every gallant carried a rapier. Some wore earrings and bracelets and used perfumes.

The women's clothes were even more extravagant than the men's. Women wore doublets and jerkins and often a long peaked stomacher. The hoop skirt, or farthingale, was introduced about the middle of Elizabeth's reign. Piles of false hair were worn, the queen setting the fashion by wearing wigs sometimes red, sometimes black. Women endured much suffering to have slender waists. It is said that they sometimes ate ashes, gravel, or tallow candles in order to keep their skin pale; but they painted their faces also, as is intimated in Hamlet's speech to Ophelia, "God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another." Women wore gauntlet gloves and colored silk stockings. The first knitted stockings were made at this time. Ladies often wore masks made of velvet or satin. There were mirrors in their fans or their girdles. Pomanders (a perfumed paste rolled into a ball) were supposed to attract suitors and keep off the plague.

Queen Elizabeth made royal "progresses" through England, visiting her palaces in turn, and then honor-

ing the mansions and manor houses of many of her subjects. She had a great gilt coach, springless, as all coaches were; but on long journeys she rode on a pillion behind her chancellor, for the roads were very poor. Some of her three thousand dresses and the rest of her baggage were carried in two-wheeled wagons drawn by six horses. Sometimes as many as six hundred carts were used. It is reported that one impoverished squire burned his house down when he received word that the queen would visit him. But in quite a different spirit the Earl of Leicester received the queen in his castle at Kenilworth and entertained her lavishly with gorgeous pageants and revels.

The queen,[1] although extravagant, vain, and artful, was, nevertheless, a patron of learning, a lover of England, and one of the wisest and strongest sovereigns of history. It is in no small measure due to her influence that the age of Shakespeare was in truth a golden age in history and in literature.

Seldom has any period presented such a galaxy of illustrious and romantic figures. There was the able statesman William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's adviser. There was Sir Philip Sidney, poet, courtier, soldier, and a "verray parfit, gentil knight," who, mortally wounded on a battlefield in Flanders, gave the cup of water which had been brought him to a dying soldier by his side. There was Sir Walter Raleigh, who first won the favor of Elizabeth by sacrificing his velvet

[1] The illustration on the opposite page is a drawing from a portrait of Queen Elizabeth painted about 1575, now in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Elizabeth I

cloak that she might walk dry-shod across the muddy street; who brought tobacco and the potato from America; who in the reign of King James was executed in the Tower of London after writing there his *History of the World* with its noble epilogue to "eloquent, just and mighty Death." There was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom the Queen greatly favored and might have married if . . . Read the tragic story in Scott's novel *Kenilworth.* There was the beautiful, ill-fated Queen of Scots, executed by Elizabeth's command in 1587. There were Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and the Cabots, explorers of the New World—all picturesque, dashing figures of high romance. And besides we find in this extraordinary age the highest, most far-shining names in English literature.

Literature in the Elizabethan Age

We are so accustomed to considering the Elizabethan Age as the period of great achievement in drama that we are apt to overlook its supremacy in other types of literature, prose as well as poetry. There were, of course, no novels in the modern sense of the word, but prose romances in imitation of the Italian *novella*, or short story, became popular. Sir Philip Sidney wrote a pastoral romance called *Arcadia.* John Lyly carried prose style to the limit of self-conscious artificiality in his *Euphues.* The essay as a type of literature was first developed in France by Michel de Montaigne. The form was introduced into England by Francis Bacon, whose essays "Of Riches," "Of Friendship," "Of Stud-

ies," are known to every student. The versatile Sidney wrote the first essay in literary criticism, "The Defense of Poesie." So far as we know Shakespeare did not try his hand at either of these prose forms, though he must have read them with interest, for he uses Lodge's romance called *Rosalynde* for the plot of *As You Like It* and Greene's *Pandosto* for *The Winter's Tale*; his style shows plainly the influence of euphuism; and a copy of Montaigne's essays with Shakespeare's name on the title page is one of the treasures of the British Museum.

Next in importance to the romance and the essay perhaps were the numerous translations from Greek, Latin, Italian, and French. Plutarch's *Lives*, the comedies of Plautus, the tragedies of Seneca, the narrative and pastoral poems of Ovid, Virgil, and Theocritus were widely read in translation and had a powerful influence upon the development of English literature. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Lodge's *Glaucus and Scilla*, and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* were amorous narrative poems modeled after those of Ovid. Pastoral poems such as Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* and Marlowe's *Come Live with Me* followed the style of the Greek poet Theocritus. The sonnet,[1] originated by Petrarch in Italy and adopted in modified form by the Elizabethans, had a tremendous vogue. Almost every poet tried his hand at a sequence or series of sonnets unfolding a more or less conventional love story. Again Sidney and Shakespeare follow the fashion, Shakespeare at his best excelling all the others, as he did in every type of writ-

[1] The Elizabethan sonnet was a fourteen-line stanza of iambic pentameter (five-accent) lines, three quatrains and a couplet.

ing which he undertook. In fact, if Shakespeare had never written a play, he would still have been the greatest poet of his time, if not of all times. It was an age of lyric poetry, "a nest of singing birds." Ben Jonson's *Drink to me Only with Thine Eyes* has been a lasting favorite, but such songs as Shakespeare's *Hark, Hark, the Lark, Who Is Sylvia, When Icicles Hang by the Wall, Take, O Take those Lips Away, O Mistress Mine, Where are you Roaming*, and a score of others have never been surpassed in any age. Next to Shakespeare probably in the field of nondramatic poetry is Edmund Spenser, best known for his long, allegorical poem, *The Faerie Queene*, built upon still another new verse form, the Spenserian stanza.[1] New forms and new subjects, noble experiments in writing both prose and poetry, gave expression to the intellectual vigor and creative genius of the age, which, however, found its most natural expression and reached its most amazing manifestation in the development of drama.

The Drama in the Elizabethan Age

By the time Shakespeare arrived in London various kinds of plays had been tried out with considerable success. Some imitations of Latin plays had been written, like *Gorboduc* and *Ralph Roister Doister*; some more English in flavor, like *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. The chronicle history, the tragedy of blood and revenge, and the romantic

[1] A stanza of nine lines rhyming *abab bcbc c*, the first eight lines iambic pentameter, the ninth iambic hexameter (six accents).

comedy had already been established in popularity by Greene, Kyd, Lodge, Peele, Nash, and Lyly. To all of these Shakespeare was indebted, but mostly to Christopher Marlowe, who in such plays as *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus* had shown the power and beauty of blank verse in dramatic writing. In the pompous, grandiloquent speeches of *Tamburlaine* sounded "Marlowe's mighty line" and in such passages as these in *Faustus* the same metrical form held wonderful poetic beauty and suggestion:

> O thou art fairer than the evening air
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

Or Faustus's exclamation when he sees Helen of Troy:

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?

Shakespeare as usual was not slow to appreciate such artistry, to learn its possibilities, and to "better the instruction." All the types of drama then in vogue he tried and in all he surpassed his contemporaries.

For the presenting of these plays there were companies of professional actors, properly licensed and organized under the nominal patronage of certain noblemen. Shakespeare acted successively in four such companies along with Richard Burbage, the greatest tragic actor, and Will Kempe, the best known comedian of the time. The next best tragedian, Edward Alleyn, was in a rival organization known as the Admiral's Men. There were no actresses in these companies, all the women's parts being taken by boys. Groups of well-trained child actors

were at one time so popular that the men's companies were hard pressed to compete with them. In general the acting was undoubtedly of high quality, probably comparing very favorably with that of to-day.

The Theatre in Shakespeare's Day

When Shakespeare arrived in London there were three theatres: the Theatre, the Curtain, and the Rose. Later were built the Swan, the Globe, and the Fortune, outside the city limits. Though these differed in size and shape, they were alike in general plan. To one approaching from the low meadows of the Bankside or by boat across the Thames the typical theatre appeared as a wooden building, three stories high, roughly circular in shape. Rising above the roof was a small structure called the hut, from the top of which a flag was flown to show when a performance was on. Over the entrance to the playhouse was its large painted sign. The sign of the Globe showed a picture of the world upheld on the shoulders of Hercules, with the inscription, "Totus mundus agit histrionem."[1]

Entering, one would find himself in a sort of yard, open to the sky, and surrounded by three tiers of galleries. The galleries were protected by a roof, supported by handsome pillars of carved oak and furnished with cushioned seats. On the side opposite the entrance, just under the hut, a large stage projected far out into the yard, or "pit." It was also partly covered by a roof

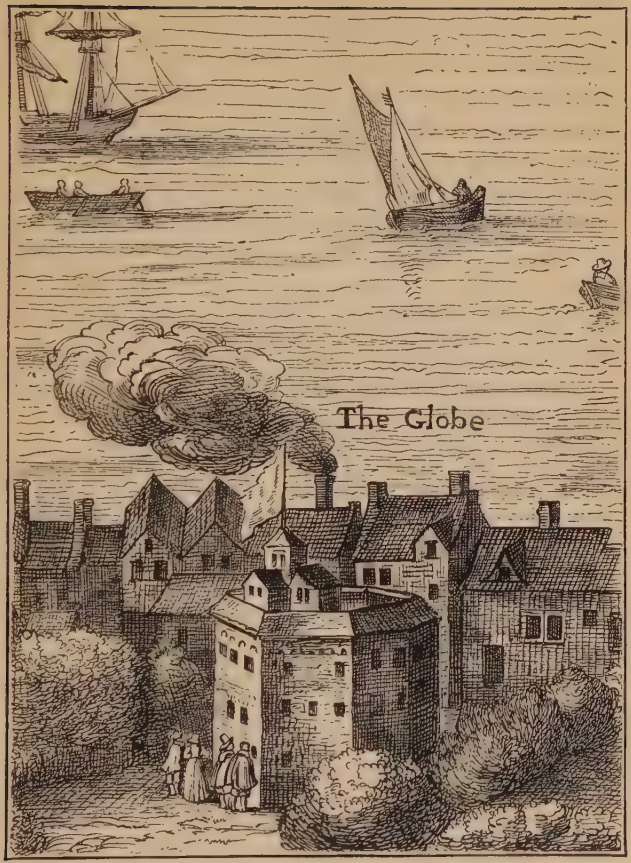
[1] Cf. the famous lines in *As You Like It*—"All the world's a stage," etc.

upheld by carved oak posts. In the hut, or "heavens," above the stage was the machinery used for letting down gods and goddesses and other supernatural beings. In *Cymbeline*, for example, one stage direction requires that Jupiter descend "in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle." In a play of Thomas Heywood's "Jupiter strikes Hercules with a thunderbolt; his body sinks, and from the heavens descends a hand in a cloud, that, from the place where Hercules was burnt, brings up a star and fixes it in the firmament." The lowest gallery, continued around, became a rear stage, shut off from the main stage by curtains. At each side of this curtained recess was a door opening into a dressing room. The second gallery, continued around, became a balcony over the stage with a window on each side, all hung with curtains. The Elizabethan stage, therefore, had three parts: the upper stage and the rear stage, both provided with curtains, black for tragedy and blue for comedy; and the projecting front stage, which could not be shut off but was surrounded on three sides by the audience, standing close to its low railing. The upper stage could be used for a balcony, a window, an upstairs room, a battlemented wall, or a neighboring hillside; the inner stage could be set to represent a banquet room, a stage for a play within the play, a bedroom, a family burial vault; while on the front stage occurred street scenes and all those having no pronounced localization and so requiring no properties. By skillfully alternating different types of scenes the playwright continued the performance on the front stage while properties were being removed or placed behind the

curtains of the rear stage. Consequently, no matter how numerous the scenes, the play moved rapidly without pauses for change of setting, the whole performance taking only about two hours. In the century following Shakespeare, however, the upper stage was eliminated and the front stage reduced to a mere "apron," leaving only the inner stage, recessed into the rear wall.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Elizabethan stage was a crude, bare place where signboards were the only means of indicating a change of scene. Judged by the standards of a generation ago, when plays of the *Way Down East* type used to arrive in town with carloads of painted wings and back drops, the Elizabethan stage might be said to be bare and unfurnished; but in this respect, as in others, the modern tendency is back to the Elizabethan. Modern stagecraft often localizes a scene by means of a few simple, movable stage properties; for example, the interior of the cathedral may be represented, not by an elaborately painted back drop, but by two tall candlesticks set against the plain folds of the back-stage curtain; for a street scene at night just a lamp-post is sufficient; a forest is suggested by three or four easily movable tree trunks just as it was in the Elizabethan production of *As You Like It*.

The costuming added much to the impression of richness and color, though it was not required to be historically accurate. Cæsar wore doublet and hose instead of a toga, and Lady Macbeth was a boy dressed in ruff, stomacher, and farthingale; but the costumes were of genuinely rich materials, elaborate, expensive, and highly decorative. The price paid for a purple



Exterior View of the Globe Theatre

cloak or "an orange-tawney doublet thick laid with gold lace" was often more than was given the dramatist for the play itself. On the stage, as well as in real life, the Elizabethan public favored fine clothes, the finest and handsomest obtainable.

In the pit, standing on the hard-packed earth, sometimes enduring rain, snow, and cold to see the play, were the poorest class of spectators,—stable boys, apprentices, vendors of apples and nuts, idlers, pickpockets, "limbs o' Limehouse," everybody who could afford a penny for admission. In the first gallery, especially in the "rooms," or boxes, near the stage, sat gentlemen of rank and wealth and prosperous merchants who paid sometimes the equivalent of two or three dollars for their seats. With them might be a few ladies with satin or velvet masks on their faces. In the Globe Theatre the orchestra was seated in the upper proscenium box on the right. In the upper galleries were artisans, mechanics, small shopkeepers, earringed sailors, and women of the bolder sort, unmasked. On the edge of the stage itself were seats for those who wished to show off their clothes, their sophisticated manners, or their critical ability. They often came late, left early, and chatted and smoked during the performance. In this heterogeneous audience only two groups were missing. One was royalty; the queen with her immediate household could hardly appear at a public theatre, though she could and did frequently summon favorite companies, including Shakespeare's, to present plays at court. The other was a group composed largely of members of the upper middle class, self-respecting,

independent, business and professional people, inclined towards Puritanism and hostile to the theatre and most other forms of amusement. Some of their criticism was narrow, prejudiced, and unreasonable; some of it was justified and became increasingly so with the decline of the drama, until, in 1642, their opposition was sufficiently strong to bring about the closing of the theatres, and the Golden Age of English dramatic literature was definitely over.

The tide of rich, robust vitality had passed the flood; the spiral had swung through the outmost sweep of its orbit. Vigorous, zestful living with its freedom, its unrestraint, and its love of pleasure had overreached itself, as it is apt to do, and had ended in license, weakness, and decadence; under the wholesome law of compensation with its "even-handed justice," civilization, before it could be restored to sanity and balance, must be chastened by the rigorous austerity and discipline of Puritanism. But at its best what an age it was! And how wonderful it would have been to meet Shakespeare and Sidney and Raleigh and the rest in this "crowded hour of glorious life"!

Suggestive Questions

1. How can you account for the fact that the three greatest periods in English literature coincide with the reigns of the three queens? Name the two queens after Elizabeth.

2. Which of the three periods does the present age most resemble in spirit? in dress? in literature?

3. Explain the meaning of the terms 'sonnet' and 'Spenserian stanza'.

4. What types of literature are familiar now that did not exist in the Elizabethan Age?

5. Define the terms 'doublet,' 'ruff,' 'points,' 'farthingale.'

6. Write in your notebook or give orally to the class a paragraph of information about such Elizabethan amusements as bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and falconry.

7. Write or give orally a brief account of some one important contemporary event in English or European history; such as the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, or the massacre of St. Bartholomew (see Chronological Chart, pp. 84–87).

[IV]

The Facts of Shakespeare's Life

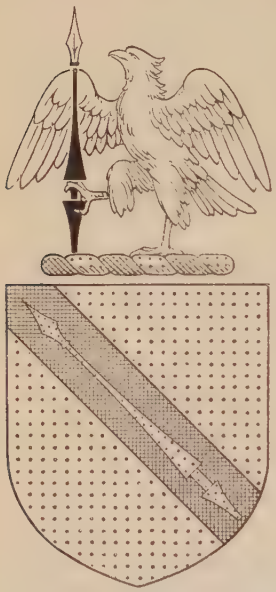
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas.—CHAUCER

The Name

The name 'Shakespeare' was not uncommon in England, especially in Warwickshire, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and it is still borne by prominent Englishmen. Its earliest appearance was in 1248 near Stratford, the spelling in that instance being 'Saksper.' From that time on the name is found in a great variety of forms from 'Saxper' to 'Shakespeare.' In the record of burial of the poet's uncle the name is 'Henry Saksper,' but in that of his wife a few years later the entry is 'wyffe of Henry Shakspere.' The Elizabethans were notoriously careless in the orthography of proper names, even legal documents being absolutely untrustworthy in this respect; but of all the spellings modern scholarship has sifted out two, 'Shakspere' and 'Shakespeare,' the former favored by the evidence of the six autographs of the poet now credited as genuine, the latter having the sanction of a large majority of the references to Shakespeare by his own contemporaries in London.

In several contemporary allusions the name is associated with military prowess on the score that it "doth

heroically sound." This idea is carried out in the coat of arms, a spear across a shield, the crest being a falcon shaking a spear in its talons. As a matter of fact, however, the origin and meaning of the word are unknown.



The Nature and Extent of our Information

It has become traditional to believe and to repeat the statement that surprisingly little is known about Shakespeare's life. As a matter of fact, as a result of continued investigations and discoveries, more information is now available about Shakespeare than about any other actor or dramatist of his time. Scores of official papers and other contemporary documents record the births, deaths, marriages, wills, tax assessments, and purchases of real estate of Shakespeare and his family, the names and salaries of his schoolmasters, the addresses of his residences in London, the plays in which he acted, the exact amount of property he owned, the sources of income from his London activities, the names of his friends and associates, their opinions of him and their references to him, and innumerable other interesting details.

It is probable that we should have a much greater knowledge of Shakespeare if it were not for what De Quincey calls "a perfect malice of misfortune pursuing the vestiges of the poet's steps." In 1613 the Globe Theatre, with which Shakespeare had been so long connected, was destroyed by fire, and there is little doubt that manuscripts of his plays perished on that occasion. In the following year a great fire took place in Stratford-on-Avon, fifty-four houses being burned. Then the house of Ben Jonson, in which there were probably parts of Shakespeare's correspondence, was also burned. Finally, there is an old tradition that when Lady Barnard, the sole granddaughter of Shakespeare, moved from his home to her husband's estate in Northamptonshire, she carried off many of his papers; and these papers have never since been traced.

The temptation to every biographer to interpret the facts and to fill in the gaps between them with surmises of his own seems irresistible, and these conjectures are often interesting and valuable; but the reader must constantly be on his guard that he may not be led across the line between fact and fiction without knowing it.

He should be very cautious, also, about assuming that passages in the plays have any autobiographical significance. Some biographers conclude that Shakespeare's marriage must have been unhappy because the Duke in *Twelfth Night* gives to a lover the advice:

> Then let thy love be younger than thyself.

And we know that Shakespeare's wife was eight years his senior. One of the latest biographers actually argues

that Shakespeare's father was very likely an amiable drunkard, because the poet depicts two such drunkards, Sir Toby Belch and Sir John Falstaff, with so much sympathy and tolerance. The statement is often made that Justice Shallow in *2 Henry IV* is a caricature of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote near Stratford, because his coat of arms has luces in it (a kind of fish).[1] Such evidence, if admitted, would prove beyond a doubt that Shakespeare, poet par excellence, felt nothing but contempt for poets; for his characters repeatedly refer to them scornfully as "jigging fools" who produce "wailful sonnets," "woeful ballads," "odious ballads"; and Hotspur in *1 Henry IV* declares that he would rather hear "a dry wheel grate on the axle tree" than listen to "mincing poetry."

Between the undisputed evidence of the documents on the one hand and the unjustified conclusions from the speeches of characters in the plays on the other, there lies a mass of tradition, some of which seems reasonable and fairly well founded and some of which is obviously mere gossip and rumor. The pages which follow give some of the best authenticated facts of the poet's life.

The life of Shakespeare falls naturally into three periods:

1. The Stratford, or Warwickshire, period, from 1564 to some date between 1586 and 1590; that is, from his birth to about his twenty-fourth year.

[1] For an interesting and complete discussion of this point, see the *Life of William Shakespeare*, by Joseph Quincy Adams. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923.

2. The London period, from about 1590 to 1604, his fortieth year.

3. The later Stratford period, 1604 to 1616, from his fortieth year until his death, at the age of fifty-two.

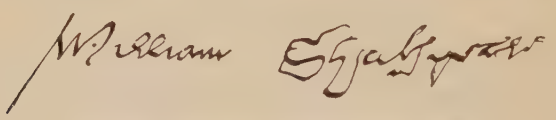
The Stratford Period

Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire, the central county of England, on April 23, 1564. He was the son of a respectable burgess, a glover, highly honored and esteemed, who in 1561 was elected one of the two chamberlains, or treasurers, of the borough, in 1565 became an alderman, and in 1568 high bailiff, or mayor, of the town. His mother was Mary Arden, of aristocratic lineage, daughter of Robert Arden, a wealthy landowner of Wilmcote. She brought as her dowry the estate of Ashbies. William was the eldest son of this marriage; his baptism is registered in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Stratford:

1564 April 26 Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakespere

The free grammar school at Stratford, the King's New School, as it had been called since 1553, was a superior institution, royally endowed, and taught by an Oxford graduate. If we may judge from the printed rules of other similar schools, the children came at six o'clock in the morning and stayed until five, with an interval for dinner at eleven. Here Shakespeare was taught the usual branches, including Latin, perhaps some Greek, the English Bible, and the writing of the old English script, which he (and Queen Elizabeth also)

continued to use even after the present, or Italian, style became common in England. It is this difference in the written characters and not poor penmanship, as students sometimes suppose, that makes the handwriting of Shakespeare and other Elizabethans so difficult



Authentic Signature of William Shakespeare

to read. In this well-equipped school, under well-educated and well-paid masters, a lad of Shakespeare's exceptional intelligence must have secured the foundation of a good education. At about the age of fourteen Shakespeare left school, after presumably completing the prescribed course of study, and began that larger education which was to fit him for a life work of brilliant achievement.

Unfortunately, the next four years lie in one of the blind spots of the poet's life. During this time nothing is definitely known of his affairs except that his father became involved in financial troubles and gave up his public offices.

In his nineteenth year Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior, if the dates on her tombstone are correct. She was the daughter of Richard Hathaway, a well-to-do farmer, who lived in the picturesque village of Shottery, a mile by footpath across the fields from Stratford. A daughter, Susanna, was born in May, 1583; and twins, Hamnet and Judith,

named for his friend and neighbor Hamnet Sadler and his wife, were baptized February 2, 1585.

Again nothing is definitely known of Shakespeare during the next seven years. Aubrey, who collected information from Stratford citizens almost fifty years after Shakespeare's death, says, "This William, being

Anne Hathaway's Cottage in Stratford-on-Avon

inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London." The only definite statement from a contemporary is that of William Beeston, a friend and fellow actor, who knew the poet during his earliest years in London. Beeston declared years afterwards that Shakespeare "knew Latin pretty well and had been a schoolmaster in the country." There seems to be no reason to discredit the statement. It is more probable than is the later, more persistent, because more dramatic, story

that Shakespeare was compelled to leave Stratford because he was caught poaching. The young schoolmaster, after perhaps four or five years somewhere in "the country," may have arrived in London as late as 1590, possibly with a play already written to present to the theatres. Both parts of Beeston's statement received some confirmation from the fact that of Shakespeare's first two plays, one, *Love's Labour's Lost*, is replete with allusions to study and school lore; and the other, *The Comedy of Errors*, is founded on two comedies by Plautus, which, it seems, Shakespeare must have read in the original Latin, for they were not translated into English until after his play was performed.

The London Period: Shakespeare's Apprenticeship

It is fairly certain that from his arrival in London Shakespeare was associated with actors, playwrights, and theatre managers. Before 1592 he had attracted sufficient attention through his plays to arouse the jealousy of another playwright, Robert Greene, who, in the prologue to a posthumous pamphlet, made a bitter attack on Shakespeare:

> To those gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays, R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and wisdom to prevent his extremities. . . .
>
> Base minded men all three of you, if by my misery you be not warned: for unto none of you (like me) sought those burs to cleave, those puppets (I mean) that spake from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colors. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were ye in that

case as I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions.

Three months later Henry Chettle, editor of Greene's papers, made public apology:

About three months since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands, among other his Groatsworth of Wit, in which a letter written to divers playmakers is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceits a living author. . . . With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heat of living writers and might have used my own discretion (especially in such a case, the author being dead), that I did not I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanor no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art.

In a few years, therefore, Shakespeare had become sufficiently well known to incur the hatred of a rival and the respect and admiration of "divers of worship."

It is likely that upon his arrival in London he had

sought out a schoolmate from Stratford, Richard Field, who had come to London at the age of fifteen to learn the printer's trade, had married a wealthy French widow, and was now the proprietor of one of the best printing establishments in the city. At any rate, in 1593 Field published Shakespeare's first poem, *Venus and Adonis*, and in the following year, his second poem, *Lucrece*. During these two years the London theatres were closed because of the plague, which probably accounts for Shakespeare's turning from the preparation of plays for the stage to the writing of nondramatic poetry.

By 1594 he is seen to be busy again with his twofold occupation of actor and playwright. Elizabethan actors usually performed every week day and often on Sundays and changed their plays from day to day. Consequently, they were required to spend their forenoons in rehearsal, absence and even tardiness being heavily fined. In the afternoon the play was performed from two to four or from three to five o'clock. In addition to this strenuous program, Shakespeare was kept constantly at work going over the dusty, tattered manuscripts of old plays owned by the theatrical company and revising and revamping them for presentation. No wonder Greene calls him a "Johannes factotum" at the theatre. At this time Shakespeare was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, which had offered him a position as actor and full-sharer besides agreeing to pay him generously for such plays as he might produce. In the list of twelve names of the members of the company Shakespeare's comes second, preceded by that

of Richard Burbage, the most distinguished actor in England in that day, and followed by that of the famous comedian, Will Kempe. Before 1594, the date of his joining this company, he had written about ten plays, besides the two nondramatic poems. In the next nineteen years, from 1594 to 1613, he produced twenty-seven more plays, including several of the world's greatest dramas, and one hundred and fifty-four sonnets.

The London Period: Fulfillment

His genius did not go unrecognized nor his industry unrewarded. Not only did the populace throng to see his plays, but the great queen herself had them performed at court for her own pleasure and the entertainment of her guests. His fellow actors spoke of him with admiration, and the noble Earl of Southampton was his personal friend as well as his patron. He owned shares in the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres. His name stands at the head of the list of "principal comedians" who acted Ben Jonson's play *Everyman in His Humour*, in 1598.

Upon the accession of James I, in May, 1603, the Lord Chamberlain's Company became the King's Company, and nine players, of whom Shakespeare was one, were singled out for special favor and honor by the king. The first play performed before King James was Jonson's *Sejanus*; Shakespeare's name appears prominently in the list of actors as one of the "principal tragœdians." Upon the king's formal entrance into the city in March, 1604, the nine players marched in the

royal procession, having been granted four and one-half yards each of scarlet cloth for liveries for the occasion. In the printed list of nine names Shakespeare's stands first. There is a tradition, founded upon the testimony of some three or four persons, that after the performance of *Macbeth* at court, the king wrote to the author a personal letter, which is now lost, but which was long in the possession of Shakespeare's godson, Sir William Davenant. It is on record that the King's men played at Oxford University on many different occasions. In August, 1608, seven of the King's Company took over the Blackfriars Theatre, a very fine playhouse, heated and lighted, and located in the heart of the city, not far from St. Paul's Church. Hereafter the company played for the six winter months at Blackfriars and for the six summer months at the open playhouse, the Globe, in Southwark, on the other side of the Thames. From his shares in these two theatres Shakespeare derived a handsome income.

While he was advancing thus phenomenally in fame and wealth and in the development of his genius, where and how did the poet live? Was his family with him at any time in London? Or had he forgotten them and his native Stratford? The second question we cannot answer; for the first and third there is abundant evidence.

During the year 1595–1596 Shakespeare had a home in the Parish of St. Helen's, Bishopgate, near the playhouse called the Theatre and not very far from the home of his friends and associates, the Burbages. His household goods were assessed for £5, an uncommonly

large sum as compared with others on the tax list, indicating a commodious and well-furnished establishment. Some biographers argue from this fact that his wife and three children were with him that winter in London. If so, they returned to the country in the summer of 1596, for in August of that year the poet's only son, Hamnet, eleven and a half years old, died in Stratford. Earlier in the same year, John Shakespeare, the poet's father, undoubtedly at the instigation and with the financial backing of his son, had applied to the herald's office for a coat of arms, which was granted. If this action indicates, as is most likely, that Shakespeare's ambition was to found a family of wealth and distinction, he must have been doubly grieved at the death of his only son.

In May, 1597, when Shakespeare was only thirty-three years old, he bought New Place, the largest and finest residence in Stratford, and established there his wife and two little girls. The place, sometimes called Great House by the Stratford people, is described as having two barns, two gardens, and ten fireplaces. There must, of course, have been numerous servants. As Rowe, one of the earliest biographers, puts it, the family were people "of figure and fashion" in the town.

Though for fifteen years longer he carried on his work in London, Shakespeare from this time regards the Stratford residence as his home; in official papers he designates himself "William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon, Gentleman"; and he adds to his already great variety of activities the more or less direct management of his country estate. In 1598 he sold to the town of Stratford a load of stone to mend the old Clopton

Bridge. During the next few years he purchased several other pieces of property in Stratford. Emerson says: "He was a veritable farmer. About the time he was writing *Macbeth* he sues Philip Rogers in the borough court of Stratford for 35s 10d for corn delivered to him at different times." Numerous references to the high regard in which he was held by his fellow townsmen are not wanting. His shrewd common sense disproves the theory that a poet of great imagination must of necessity be a fool in worldly affairs. In Shakespeare great literary power and artistic instinct did not scorn to consort with keen business ability and the mastery of the details of daily life.

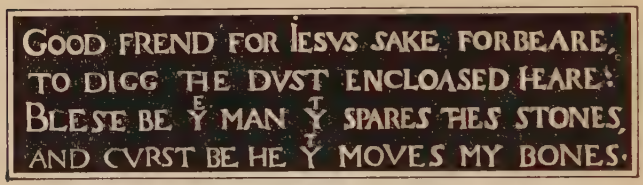
For some six or seven years he had lodgings in London in the home of a French Huguenot named Simon Mountjoy, a maker of wigs and headdresses, at the corner of Silver and Monkwell streets. In 1613 he bought a house in Blackfriars, not, however, for a home, but for an investment. After 1603 Shakespeare's name no longer appears on the lists of the King's Company, from which it would seem that he had given up acting. He continued to write plays, however, both independently and in collaboration with a gentleman of noble family and university training, John Fletcher. *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* were the product of this partnership. A recently discovered document shows Shakespeare in London as late as 1613. In that year the Earl of Rutland took part in a tournament at Whitehall, and the heraldic device and motto on his shield on that occasion were designed and executed by Shakespeare and Burbage.

Last Years in Stratford

From 1604 to 1611 Shakespeare had been drawn more and more to his native Stratford and from 1611 to 1616 his life was almost wholly in Warwickshire, where his interests lay in the affairs of his family, his estate, and his community. In 1607 his older daughter, Susanna, married Dr. John Hall, a newcomer in Stratford, a university graduate with the degree of Master of Arts, and a physician of considerable reputation throughout several counties. Among his patients were the Earl and Countess of Northampton, who lived in Ludlow Castle, forty miles away. The younger daughter, Judith, remained unmarried until she was thirty-two years old, when, in February, 1616, she married Thomas Quiney, a neighbor's son, whom she must have known for many years.

At the beginning of the year 1616 Shakespeare's health was failing, and on January 25 a first draft of his will was prepared. The Reverend John Ward, vicar of the local church fifty years later, says that the poet contracted a fever at a "merry meeting" at New Place with two other eminent poets, Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton. At any rate, on March 25, a few weeks after Judith's marriage, Shakespeare sent for his lawyer to make the necessary changes in his will. At this time he was so ill that he was obliged to dictate the desired alterations and he was unable to remember the name of one of the three nephews to whom he left small legacies. He died about a month later, April 23, 1616, and was buried within the chancel rail of the beautiful church

on the Avon. Above his grave a flat stone bears the famous inscription:


GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE:
BLESE BE Y MAN Y SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y MOVES MY BONES.

This doggerel verse, evidently intended to impress sextons and gravediggers, has served its purpose well, for the poet's grave has never been opened, not even to remove the body to Westminster Abbey.

Dr. Hall and his wife took up their residence at the Great House, and Anne Shakespeare, the poet's wife, continued to live there with them and her little granddaughter until her death seven years later. She had expressed the wish to be buried in the same grave with her husband; but the influence of the uncouth rhyme prevailed, and his grave was not opened. She was buried near him; and some lines of affectionate praise written in Latin, doubtless by her son-in-law, Dr. Hall, were inscribed on a brass plate on her tombstone.

No descendants of Shakespeare are now living. His daughter Judith Quiney had three sons, the oldest named Shakespeare, but they died in infancy or early youth. Susanna Hall had one daughter, Elizabeth, the last of Shakespeare's lineal descendants, who married Thomas Nash of Stratford. After his death she married Sir John Barnard and moved from New Place to her husband's residence in another county. It would seem

that some papers belonging to Shakespeare must have been in the house, but thus far no trace of them has been found. Should such papers come to light, a very different biography of the poet might have to be written.

Suggestive Questions

1. Put into modern English the quotation at the beginning of this chapter. Are great poets usually dreamers, recluses, and impractical idealists, or are they busy men of affairs?

2. What would be a reasonable guess as to how Shakespeare may have spent his time between the ages of fourteen and eighteen? between twenty-two and twenty-eight?

3. What papers of Shakespeare's should you particularly like to find? Imagining that you have found them, write a report of the manner and the nature of your discovery.

4. Using the chart given on pages 84–87, answer the following questions:

a. Did Mary Arden live to see her son honored and prosperous? Mention events that prove this.

b. What famous painter and sculptor died the year Shakespeare was born? What great astronomer was born the same year?

c. How old was Shakespeare when Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle? Do you think Shakespeare saw the celebration?

d. What versions of the Bible were in use in Shakespeare's day? Which did he probably know best?

e. How old was Shakespeare probably when his first play appeared? What was this play?

f. Several well-known travelers and explorers were contemporaries of Shakespeare. Name the ones listed in the chart and tell what each one did.

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

Except in the case of Shakespeare's plays (see note) the literature dates refer to first publication

Year	Shakespeare: Biography; Poems	Shakespeare: Plays	British and Foreign Literature	History and Biography
1564	Birth. Baptism, April 26, Stratford-on-Avon		Quart livre de Pantagruel	Michelangelo died. Calvin died. Marlowe born. Galileo born
1565	Father became alderman		Sackville and Norton's Gorboduc printed	Philip II of Spain gave his name to Philippine Islands
1566	Brother Gilbert born		Udall's Roister Doister printed?	Murder of Rizzio
1568	Father, as bailiff of Stratford, entertained Queen's and Earl of Worcester's actors	Note. The plays in the columns below are arranged in the probable, though purely conjectural, order of composition. Dates appended to plays are those of first publication. Where no date is given, the play was first published in the First Folio (1623). M signifies that the play was mentioned by Meres in the Palladis Tamia (1598)	The Bishops Bible. La Taille's Saülle Furieux. R. Grafton's Chronicle	Mary of Scots a prisoner in England. Ascham died. Coverdale died. Netherlands War of Liberation
1572			Camoens' Os Lusiadas (The Lusiads)	Knox died. Massacre of St. Bartholomew
1573			Tasso's Aminta	Ben Jonson born? Donne born
1574	Brother Richard born		Mirror for Magistrates (third edition)	Earl of Leicester's players licensed
1575			Gammer Gurton's Needle. Golding's Ovid (complete)	Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth. Palissy lectured on Natural History
1576			The Paradise of Dainty Devices. Gascoigne's Steel Glass	"The Theatre" opened in Finsbury Fields, London, followed by "The Curtain." Hans Sachs died
1577	Father in financial difficulties		Holinshed's Chronicles	Drake sailed to circumnavigate globe

1579	Sister Ann died (aged eight)				Gosson's **School of Abuse**. North's Plutarch. Lyly's **Euphues** (pt. 1). Spenser's **Shepherd's Calendar**	**Union of Utrecht.** Tasso put in confinement at Ferrara
1580	Brother Edmund born				Montaigne's **Essais** (first edition)	Brown founded Separatists. Camoens died
1581					Tasso's **Gerusalemme Liberata**	Dutch Declaration of Independence
1582	Married Anne Hathaway				The Rheims New Testament	Accademia della Crusca founded
1583	Daughter Susanna born				Garnier's **Les Juives**	Sir Humphrey Gilbert drowned
1584					Lyly's **Campaspe**. Peele's **Arraignment of Paris**	William the Silent assassinated. Ivan the Terrible died
1585	Twin children (Hamnet, Judith) born				Guarini's **Pastor Fido** (1590)	Ronsard died
1586	Probably went to London				Camden's **Britannia**	Sir Philip Sidney killed
1587					Hakluyt's **Four Voyages**. **Faustbuch** (Spiess, Frankfort)	Execution of Mary of Scots
1588					**Martin Marprelate: The Epistle**	Defeat of Spanish Armada
1589		COMEDIES	HISTORIES	TRAGEDIES	Puttenham's **Art of English Poesie**	Henry of Navarre, King of France. Palissy died in Bastille
1590		**Love's Labour's Lost** (M, 1598)			Marlowe's **Tamburlaine**. Spenser's **Faerie Queene**, I–III. Lodge's **Rosalynde**. Sidney's **Arcadia**	Battle of Ivry
1591		**Comedy of Errors** (M)	**1 Henry VI** **2 Henry VI**		Sidney's **Astrophel and Stella**. Harington's tr. of **Orlando Furioso**	Herrick born

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART (CONTINUED)

YEAR	SHAKESPEARE				BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
	BIOGRAPHY; POEMS	PLAYS (see note above)				
1592	Greene's attack in **Groatsworth of Wit**	**Two Gentlemen of Verona** (M)	**Richard III** (M, 1597). **3 Henry VI**	**Romeo and Juliet** (M, 1597)	Daniel's **Delia**. Lyly's **Gallathea** (**Galatea**)	Greene died. Montaigne died. London theatres closed through plague
1593	**Venus and Adonis** (seven editions, 1593–1602)		**King John** (M). **Richard II** (M, 1597)	**Titus Andronicus** (M, 1594)	Peele's **Edward I.** Barnes's **Sonnets**	Marlowe died. Herbert born
1594	**Lucrece** (five editions, 1594–1616)	**A Midsummer Night's Dream** (M, 1600)			Rinuccini's **Dafne. Satire Menippée**	Palestrina ("Princeps Musicæ") died
1595	Valuable contemporary references to Shakespeare	**All 's Well that Ends Well. Taming of the Shrew**			Peele's **Old Wives' Tale.** Spenser's **Epithalamion**	Tasso died. Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition to Guiana. Sir J. Hawkins died
1596	Son Hamnet died. Family applied for coat-of-arms		**1 Henry IV** (M, 1598). **2 Henry IV** (1600)		Drayton's **Mortimeriados. Faerie Queene,** Books IV–VI	Burbage built Blackfriar's Theatre. Descartes born. Sir F. Drake died
1597	Purchased New Place, Stratford	**Merry Wives of Windsor. Merchant of Venice** (M, 1600)			Bacon's **Essays** (first edition). Hall's **Virgidemiarum**	The Tyrone rebellion
1598	Shakespeare acted in Jonson's **Every Man in His Humour**	**Much Ado About Nothing** (1600)	**Henry V** (1600)		Meres's **Palladis Tamia.** Chapman's Homer (pt. 1). Lope de Vega's **Arcadia**	Peele died. Edict of Nantes
1599	Part proprietor of Globe Theatre. Coat-of-arms granted. **The Passionate Pilgrim**	**As You Like It**			Alemán's **Guzman de Alfarache.** Peele's **David and Bethsabe**	Spenser died. Globe Theatre built. Oliver Cromwell born
1600	Won a London lawsuit	**Twelfth Night**			**England's Helicon**	Calderon born. Bruno died

1601	Father died. **The Phœnix and Turtle**			**Julius Cæsar**	Jonson's **Poetaster**	The Essex plot. Rivalry between London adult and boy actors
1602	Purchased more Stratford real estate			**Hamlet** (1603)	Dekker's **Satiromastix**	Bodleian Library founded
1603	His company acted before the Queen	**Troilus and Cressida** (1609)			Jonson's **Sejanus**	Queen Elizabeth died. Millenary Petition
1604	Sued Rogers at Stratford	**Measure for Measure**		**Othello**	Marlowe's **Faustus** (1588–1589)	Hampton Court Conference
1605	Godfather to William D'Avenant			**Macbeth**	**Don Quixote** (pt. 1)	Gunpowder plot. Sir Thomas Browne born
1606	**King Lear** given before Court			**King Lear** (1608)	Chapman's **Monsieur D'Olive**	Lyly died. Corneille born
1607	Daughter Susanna married Dr. Hall			**Timon of Athens**	Dekker and Webster's **Westward Ho!**	Settlement of Jamestown
1608	Birth of granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall. Death of mother (Mary Arden)	**Pericles** (1609)		**Antony and Cleopatra**	Captain John Smith's **A True Relation.** Middleton's **A Mad World**	Milton born. Quebec founded
1609	**Sonnets. A Lover's Complaint**			**Coriolanus**	The Douai Old Testament	Separatists (Pilgrims) in Leyden
1610	Purchased more real estate	**Cymbeline**			Strachey's **Wracke and Redemption**	Henry IV (Navarre) assassinated
1611	Subscribed for better highways	**Winter's Tale** **The Tempest**			King James Bible (A.V.). Bellarmine's **Puissance du Pape**	Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden
1613	Invested in London house property. Brother Richard died		**Henry VIII**		Drayton's **Polyolbion**	Globe Theatre burned
1616	Made his will. Daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney. Died April 23 (May 3, New Style)				Captain John Smith's **New England.** Folio edition of Jonson's Poems. D'Aubigné's **Les Tragiques** (1577)	Cervantes died. Beaumont died. Baffin explores Baffin's Bay. Harvey lectured on the circulation of the blood

5. The following quotation and questions appear in a recent examination given by the College Entrance Examination Board. They seem of interest in connection with the facts discussed in this chapter.[1]

> I like to think of Shakespeare, not as when
> In our old London of the spacious time
> He took all amorous hearts with honeyed rhyme;
> Or flung his jest at Burbage and at Ben;
> Or speared the flying follies with his pen;
> Or, in deep hour, made Juliet's love sublime;
> Or from Lear's kindness and Iago's crime
> Caught tragic hint of heaven's dark way with men.
> These were great memories, but he laid them down.
> And when, with brow composed and friendly tread,
> He sought the little streets of Stratford town,
> That knew his dreams and soon must hold him dead,
> I like to think how Shakespeare pruned his rose,
> And ate his pippin in his orchard close.
>
> E. K. Chambers

a. What two aspects of Shakespeare's life are referred to?

b. Give the substance of the last six lines in your own words. What gain or loss has there been by turning them into prose?

[1] From examination questions copyrighted by the College Entrance Examination Board. Used by permission.

[V]

Shakespeare the Man

He is the man who of all Modern, and perhaps Ancient, Poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul.—DRYDEN

Humanity's divinest son,
That sprightliest, gravest, wisest, kindest one.—LEIGH HUNT

Shakespeare's Great Inheritance

Among the many definitions of genius which have been given to the world none is better than that which has come in the strange garb of an old Welsh triad, "There are three foundations of genius,—the gift of the gods, man's exertion, and events to suit." Goethe expressed the same idea in the remark, "Genius always depends upon a great faculty and a great inheritance." At first sight these definitions of genius seem more applicable to the man who dominates the wills of others and realizes his ideals in the world of hard facts than to the poet and the philosopher who sway the imagination and the intellect. It is easy to see, for example, how fortunate Napoleon was in his "events to suit"; namely, the French Revolution, which alone made his marvelous career possible. But a little examination of facts reveals that he whom the world hails as a man of genius in the realm of letters is equally dependent with the man of affairs on a "great inheritance."

Great and indispensable as the gift of the gods may be, great and indispensable as man's exertion—his power of taking infinite pains—may be, the fact remains that, if a man is to secure a commanding place as a poet or as a philosopher, he must inherit satisfactory conditions and fortunate circumstances of time and place. The age in which Chaucer lived immediately succeeded one of the most brilliant in European literary history. To the romances of the French *trouvères*,—the Arthurian romances, the romances of King Horn, of King Alexander, of the Rose, and others,—which had been read widely over the continent during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were added in the fourteenth the works of the great Italian poets, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Robert Burns was equally fortunate, being born at the meeting of two ages and of two worlds at the moment when bookish literature was beginning to reach the people; when society was first learning to admit the low-born; and when no hand had yet struck the harp that hung in golden silence in the air of Britain. Sir Walter Scott was born at the latest hour possible for a great epic minstrel; around his Border cradle floated memories of a wild past, refrains of ballad, echoes of story, tales of knighthood, chivalry, and glamourie.

But while in every man of genius are fulfilled the conditions involved in the triad of the old Kymric bard, there is no better illustration of its truth than the supreme literary genius of the modern world, William Shakespeare. If ever a man had a "great inheritance," that man was Shakespeare. Chaucer inherited the Eng-

Stratford-on-Avon

lish language when it had first become fit for literary purposes. Shakespeare received it when it was in its freshest perfection; when it was becoming, in the strictest sense of the word, modern; and when its possibilities as a vehicle of poetic beauty, simplicity, power, passionate intensity, and elevation had been revealed by such masters of melody, harmony, and variety as Edmund Spenser and Christopher Marlowe. But Shakespeare's great inheritance was not limited by any means to the fresh perfection of the noble English tongue. He not only found words ready to his use and a book language established which was bidding fair to be the greatest of the modern world; he was born into a time that was throbbing and palpitating with epoch-making ideas and into a country where those ideas were focusing themselves into glorious energy in the manifold activities of the Renaissance—a time so full of action and vitality that it turned naturally to drama for artistic expression. Furthermore, Shakespeare was born of typical English stock in the very heart of England, where the three races, Celtic, Saxon, and Norman, were most perfectly blended. Suppose he had not been a country boy! Take away from his writings the flowers, the woods, the open sky, the moonlight on meadows, and the feelings, thoughts, and doings of the country folk, and we should have not Shakespeare at all, but Bacon or Jonson or some other. Suppose he had never been forced by the financial reverses of his family and his own expanding powers to go to London, where he found the activity of the theatres, the inspiration of literary associates, the contact with the nobility and the court,

the teeming life of the city streets and the Thameside. Surely nature was wonderfully kind in her arrangement of "events to suit."

In getting at the man William Shakespeare, as in getting a true notion of any other literary man, we are dependent upon two kinds of evidence: the records which inform us of the leading events of his life, including the allusions to his person and habits left us by his contemporaries, and the personal information that may be derived from a careful, critical study of his own writings.

The events of his life we have already noted. A study of his writings leaves us to a considerable degree baffled. In Ben Jonson's *Works and Letters* there is a perfect mine of information regarding his contemporaries, poems to James, to Charles, to the whole circle of peers and literary acquaintances, poems on births, marriages, and deaths, poems on every occasion or event of public or private interest. Among the many literary men then living there was kept up a regular cross fire of witty effusions and clever squibs, each one intended to evoke a reply. But nothing could extort, no one could elicit a return shot from Shakespeare. He never placarded and advertised his opinions of men and things. Polonius we know well; he is more real than Lord Burleigh, as Hotspur is more real than Essex, and Lady Macbeth than the Countess of Pembroke. But Shakespeare is no one of his characters, though he is in a sense all of them; and he reveals almost nothing of his own feelings, opinions, and personal qualities to the "foiled searching of mortality." However, we can say, after all, that

Shakespeare was the kind of man who could create these characters and write these lines, and that is not little, but much, to know about him. While it would be futile to take as Shakespeare's any opinion that his characters may happen to express, it would also be absurd to suppose that any man is able to create sympathetically any character whose feelings he is not capable of understanding and sharing. As Emerson says, "The key to every man is his thought."

From a careful study of these two sources, the events of his life and the thought creations in his pages, what may we deduce about Shakespeare the man?

The Scope and Penetration of Shakespeare's Mind

The thing that strikes us most forcibly in such a study is the amazing fullness and symmetry of his nature. In his many-sidedness and versatility, his zeal to know much and to live fully, he was a typical Renaissance figure. Bacon says, "Reading maketh a full man," and Shakespeare was indisputably a reader. Without being a scholar of vast learning, he had an extensive knowledge of most of the literature existing in his day. Not only did he know thoroughly the plays written by his contemporaries and predecessors, but he was familiar with the prose and nondramatic poetry of his time. Sidney's *Arcadia* and his sonnets, a half dozen other sonnet sequences, narrative poems like Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*; prose romances like Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Greene's *Pandosto*, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the works of Chaucer, Gower, Spenser, and Lyly; trans-

lations of Italian novels, Plutarch's *Lives*, Lucian's *Dialogues* and the works of Livy, Ovid, Seneca, and other Latin and Greek writers; and by no means least of all, the Bible and Prayer Book, all contribute directly to his writings, besides, of course, numbers of other books to which he makes no direct reference. And this was in an age when reading as an intellectual activity was new, not a matter of course as it is now.

Special inquiry has been made as to Shakespeare's reading in other languages than his own. Unquestionably he learned Latin at the Stratford school and thus obtained the rudiments of the ordinary classical education of his day, which enabled him to hold his own with the majority of his fellow writers, though he did not lay claim to erudition after the fashion of Ben Jonson and many of the other university-trained dramatists. Greek he may or may not have learned at school, and there is no proof nor probability of his having learned it afterwards. What he acquired of French and Italian was not the result of his school education but of independent study in his leisure hours during those first years in London. He was greatly influenced by Italian literature, but it is probable that he read it in English or French translations. In general, our conclusion must be that while Shakespeare probably knew no foreign language with scholarly completeness, he was familiar with a great mass of Greek, Latin, French, and Italian literature, some in the original and some in translations.

Not only from reading, however, but from alert and interested observation came much of Shakespeare's

marvelous store of general information. He knew flowers and birds and fish; his works are full of allusions to horses, from "Dobbin the thill-horse" to the fiery Pegasus whose rider could "witch the world with noble horsemanship." He knew the folklore, the habits, the jokes of country people, and all the technical vocabulary of hunting, hawking, and other sports of the nobility. His characters speak with easy familiarity of gardening,—the use of the dibble, grafting, rooting out weeds in spring when "weeds are shallow-rooted." Books have been written to show that he must at some time have been a sailor because, though he was brought up in an inland county, he introduces so naturally allusions to the sea and to the intimate details of a sailor's life. He knew, for example, that the air in a new ship is clean, in an old one, foul; that sailors ate hard biscuits, which they broke with their fists instead of their fingers; that the tide just at its height is "at a still-stand, running neither way"; that porpoises "bounce and tumble" in the waves. There are about two hundred and forty separate passages containing such allusions to the sea. Books have been written also to prove that Shakespeare must at one time have been a lawyer, and a doctor, so many and so varied are his references to details of law and medicine. One commentator reduces this line of argument *ad absurdum* by maintaining that if this be valid logic, then Shakespeare was a woman, for he shows extraordinary insight into the workings of a woman's mind and heart.

His knowledge of music is perhaps the most astonishing of all. No one would bring in musical allusions so

constantly, would frame metaphors involving musical terms so familiarly, unless his head were full of musical lore. For example, Falstaff, commenting on Shallow's extreme leanness, remarks, "The case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him." And again, in the love scene between Othello and Desdemona, Iago, the villain, mutters aside:

> O, you are well tuned now!
> But I'll set down the pegs that make this music.

Every musician, knowing how discord is made by tampering with the tuning pegs, recognizes the cleverness of the metaphor. The plays are crowded with such technical terms as 'set,' 'prick-song,' 'minim rest,' 'dump,' 'crotchet,' 'consort,' 'broken music,' 'catch,' 'diapason,' 'descant,' 'mean,' 'plain-song,' and dozens of others. Of all other writers only Browning can be compared with Shakespeare in his range of general information and particularly his knowledge of music. Even in our own day, when information on every possible subject is disseminated in tons of printed and illustrated books and magazines, only Kipling, with his knowledge of machinery, of the army, of India, and of the sea, displays in his works anything like the variety of information that we find in Shakespeare. Kipling may not know the exact mechanism of the bolts and screws of an engine, but he understands the engine nevertheless. Again we note that in Shakespeare there is no evidence of professional thoroughness in any of these subjects but only of a marvelous acquisition of general knowledge by an interested, intelligent, "apprehensive" mind.

The Many-Sidedness of Shakespeare's Genius

Far more important than his knowledge of facts is the sanity of the man, the wisdom which is not only knowledge but the just appraisal of knowledge, a large and catholic humanity, a richness of reflection, a marvelous balance and symmetry of qualities. On the one hand are prudence, shrewdness, industry, love of prosperity and respectability; on the other gentleness, liberalism, conviviality, keen sensibilities, infinite longings, lofty imagination. He enjoyed delicate wit and free, robust, rollicking humor; but there was in him a strain of sadness, even of melancholy. He was a man of strong animal temperament matched by a profound sense of responsibility, the root of all moral sense. His associates lived riotously, and he did not remain aloof from the tavern life of his time. But his moral nature, once matured, seems to have suffered no disintegration.

More than any man he felt life to be a dream; but he also was related by every fiber of his being to the world of the real and concrete. He walked in the woods of Warwickshire enjoying the birds and flowers; he entered the Mermaid Tavern after the theatre and took pleasure in the good supper, the cup of canary, and the talk with his friends. Fuller in his *Worthies of England* (1662) writes of Shakespeare: "Many were the wit combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man of war; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man of war, lesser in

bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Jonson's heavier mind and greater erudition furnish the point to a number of traditional anecdotes. One relates that Jonson and Shakespeare "being merry at a tavern," Jonson began to make up an epitaph. He had produced only this beginning:

> Here lies Ben Jonson
> Who was once one . . .

when Shakespeare took it over and quickly finished it thus:

> That while he lived was a slow thing
> And now being dead, is no-thing.

Another tells how Shakespeare, who was godfather to one of Jonson's children, had been considering what gift to make to his godchild. "I'faith, Ben," said he at last, "I'll e'en give him a dozen of latten[1] spoons and thou shalt translate them."

That Shakespeare had a warm and steadfast affection for his friends and was loved by them we have abundant testimony. Many references are made to him by his contemporaries in a tone of comradely affection and respect—"good Will," "friendly Shakespeare," "gentle Shakespeare," "our fellow Shakespeare," and, most frequently quoted of all, the statement of Ben himself, "I loved the man and do honor his memory, on this side idolatry as much as any. He was indeed honest and

[1] An alloy of brass or brasslike metal much used at this time.

of an open and free nature." He seems a man whose soul and body were at equilibrium, whose solid muscles counterpoised the sensibility of his nerves, whose genius was not a distemper but a harmonious vitality.

Shakespeare's Philosophy

Is it strange that a man of this sort should have an overwhelming metaphysical tendency? That such is the case no one can doubt who has read his tragedies. They reveal a vivid sense of *τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά*, the things beyond the physical and material world. There is some power above man to whose changeless laws man must conform or suffer catastrophe. This principle underlies all the tragedies, not as a preachment, but as an accepted conviction; and the catastrophe when complete is not merely external, a climax of disastrous circumstances, but subjective, metaphysical. *Macbeth* is a complete tragedy because in that play the two protagonists suffer the disintegration of their own moral natures. In *King Lear*, on the contrary, the soul of the stubborn, headstrong old monarch, chastened by suffering, frees itself from bitterness and egotistic frenzy, his faculties are touched with order and peace, and his final grief is for others.

Large and full is the poet's conception of space and time, as is evident in such passages as the well-known one in the last act of *The Merchant of Venice*:

> . . . Look, how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold:
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
> But in his motion like an angel sings.

And in the prologue to *2 Henry IV*:

> I, from the orient to the drooping west,
> Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold
> The acts commenced on this ball of earth.

Again in *Measure for Measure*, Act III, Scene i:

> But to die, and go we know not where . . .
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world.

But not in time nor space nor death nor the "ball of earth" itself is there any ultimate reality:

> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time.[1]

Earthly life in all its outward manifestations is hollow and evanescent. It is "a walking shadow" or "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Shakespeare's view of the constitution of the physical universe shows traces of the grim but grand old Scandinavian cosmology, with its three worlds, which, when the great tree of existence has been gnawed through, will fall together in vast and final destruction, vanishing in a reek of smoke. In *The Tempest*, Prospero speaks the words which best interpret to us the poet's cosmology:

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;

[1] *Macbeth*, V, v.

> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

Not only in the plays but also in the sonnets this metaphysical mood is the ground melody underlying all the variations of his thought. Shakespeare saw life steadily and saw it whole, but he saw it ever on the background of eternity.

But this glimpse into the depths and heights in the background of his mind does not disturb our conviction that, after all, he accepted the world as he found it, good and evil together, enjoyed its pleasures, suffered its sorrows, reverenced its dignities, respected its laws, and laughed at its absurdities. Emerson, seeing the rare and finely balanced personality behind the plays, exclaims: "What king has he not taught state? What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy? What lover has he not outloved? What sage has he not outseen? What gentleman has he not instructed in behavior?" All in all, we may apply to him his own eulogy of Brutus:

> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, "This was a man!"[1]

[1] *Julius Cæsar*, V, v.

Shakespeare's Personal Appearance

Some readers will feel that no chapter on Shakespeare the man can be regarded as complete unless it tells how he looked. The two earliest likenesses are the bust in Stratford church, made shortly after the poet's death, and the portrait published in the first complete edition of the plays in 1623. Though both are obviously crude and expressionless, they picture a well-shaped head with regular, interesting features, large eyes, and full lips. The bust was originally painted in colors, showing the eyes hazel and the hair and beard auburn. What expression there is suggests cheerful good humor rather than intellectual depth or poetic sensibility. Aubrey, one of the earliest of Shakespeare's biographers, states that he was "a handsome well-shap'd man, very good company and of a very ready and pleasant and smooth wit."

> The folk who lived in Shakespear's day
> And saw that gentle figure pass
> By London bridge, his frequent way,—
> They hardly knew what man he was.
>
> The pointed beard, the courteous mien,
> The equal port to high and low,
> All this they saw, or might have seen,
> But not the light behind the brow.
>
> THOMAS B. ALDRICH

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Discuss in relation to Shakespeare each part of the old Welsh triad: "Genius is the gift of the gods, man's exertion, and events to suit."

2. How did Shakespeare get so intimate a knowledge of ships and the sea?

3. Explain the statement: "In his many-sidedness and versatility Shakespeare was a typical Renaissance figure."

4. Give reasons why we, like Shakespeare, should read current literature.

5. Why should we know, as he did, some of the literature of the past and of other countries? What, for example?

6. The following question is taken from a recent College Entrance Board examination:[1]

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguessed at.—Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

a. Show the thought divisions in this sonnet and the relationship of each division to the other.

b. State briefly in your own words Arnold's characterization of Shakespeare.

[1] From examination questions copyrighted by the College Entrance Examination Board. Used by permission.

[VI]

Shakespeare's Art

Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part;
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion.—Ben Jonson

Lyric poetry is the expression of emotion. The savage who murmurs to himself the awe and beauty awakened by a great storm is creating a lyric poem. Epic poetry is narrative, the telling of a story or series of stories. The minstrel who, in rhythmic chant, recounts the heroic deeds of the tribal chief is composing an epic poem. A drama is an epic whole made up of lyric parts. Every drama tells a story; but its method of telling it is to have each of the *dramatis personæ* appear on the stage and express in terms of present emotion (lyric) what he or she feels on the present occasion. To these it adds action; and the combination of the three great forms of imaginative representation of life makes drama the overwhelming thing it is in its appeal to our common human nature. In its final art form it came comparatively late in the history of literature—only after lyric forms had given beauty and flexibility of language and the "inventions" of the epic had furnished material for plots. As the latest and most complex of art forms, it is the most difficult and technical.

Shakespeare's Dramatic Art

The poet William Collins says:

> Our Shakespeare scorned the trifling rules of art,
> But knew to conquer and surprise the heart.

The last part of his statement is gloriously true; the first part is unquestionably false. Far from scorning the rules of his art, he studied them thoroughly and employed them with masterly cleverness. His genius was not of the sort which ripens over-early. At the age of twenty-eight he was a "Johannes factotum" in the theatrical business. In this apprenticeship he learned to use the tools of his trade; for the art of writing plays as practiced by Shakespeare, Molière, and all the greatest dramatists is acquired not in the study but in the theatre. Its success depends upon the skill of the craftsman as well as upon the passion of the poet. During these early years Shakespeare was experimenting in comedy in various directions; and, in historical tragedy, submitting himself to the influence of his great fellow dramatist, Marlowe.

There was at this time a strong and general feeling in favor of historical subjects, especially those having in them elements of tragical depth and intensity. The greatness of contemporary events had created a new sense of the grandeur and continuity of the nation's life and excited among all classes a vivid interest in the leading personalities and the critical studies that had marked its progress. That this bent of popular feeling was followed by Shakespeare is well illustrated by his

early plays dealing with the distracted reign of King John, the Wars of the Roses, and the tragic lives of Richard II and Richard III. These historical plays possess the unity of a popular chronicle from *Richard II* to *Henry VIII*. Schlegel calls them a national epic. Thus Shakespeare brought the national history-drama to its perfection and at the same time to its close.

Tragedy represents a conflict between an heroic figure and great opposing forces, resulting in the defeat of the hero. According to the rules of the classic drama of Greece and Rome, it must have only one plot or line of action, be enacted (or reported) in one place, and occupy the space of one day. These restrictions, known as the classical unities of time, place, and action, were carefully adhered to by the more scholarly dramatists. On the other hand, some of the early Elizabethan tragedy was a mass of incoherent incident, reeking with blood and horror, cruelty and revenge. Shakespeare refined, ennobled, constructed, and cleansed from grossness the older tragic stories, at the same time emancipating the tragic form from the restrictions of the classic unities; and we have the result in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, the world's greatest tragic dramas. In these we find exhibited, with force and fullness beyond all words, the struggle between will and obstacle, character and circumstance. In these we see mirrored the working of those passions which, if they achieve the mastery over man, bring about his doom.

Comedy represents a conflict between certain persons and their environment, resulting in the triumph of the persons over the external circumstances. This was the

dramatic form least advanced when Shakespeare came to London. It was in comedy that his early triumphs were won and his superiority was most signally shown. His were not comedies of character, depicting personal eccentricities; nor comedies of manners, satirizing social customs. They were what J. A. Symonds has called the Comedy of the Imagination. This, he says, is Shakespeare's invention. It carries us "into a world of pure Romance, where men and women move in the ethereal atmosphere of fancy." Again, after two or three early experiments Shakespeare won his way to the highest achievement of his time and of all times in such romantic comedies as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*.

What is the secret, in each case, of Shakespeare's dominance? For better understanding, it may perhaps be analyzed into three component elements: dramatic technique, poetic genius, and psychological power.

Shakespeare's Mastery of Dramatic Technique

Nowhere is this threefold supremacy more evident than in his revision of old plays and stories. Never in the history of literature, as never in opera or in painting, has originality in the choice of subject been considered essential. The greatest poems of Keats, Longfellow, and Tennyson are created from old material; so are some famous poems of the present day, such as *Tristram*, by Edward Arlington Robinson, and *John Brown's Body*, by Stephen Vincent Benét; and Milton's

sublime epic is based on the very oldest of stories, the creation of the world and the fall of man. Greek tragedy of the classic period was all based on legendary material. *Herod*, *Ulysses*, *Salome*, *The House of Rimmon*, *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, and *Pharaoh's Daughter* are titles of modern plays dealing with old stories. This custom was particularly prevalent in the Elizabethan period, when fascinating romantic tales from Italy and France were available in translation, and manuscripts of old plays, the property of the theatrical companies, some of them already revised and rewritten several times, were at the disposal of the company's playwright if he wished to work them over. Shakespeare selects, combines, compresses, and reconstructs the incidents, often retaining many of the absurdities of the original plots. Sometimes he takes several stories from different sources and weaves them into one, as in *The Merchant of Venice*. Frequently he introduces episodes to heighten interest, to maintain suspense, to allow time to pass between parts of the main action, to give contrast or relief or to show another side to some character. These episodes in Shakespeare are always vital or beautiful, making the play richer and more effective. The dialogue between Lady Macduff and her little son, the conversation of Lorenzo and Jessica in the moonlit garden at Belmont, the story of the rings given to the judge and the judge's clerk, the speech of Mercutio about Queen Mab, and that of Jaques about the seven ages of man are examples of such interpolations. Here is genius "to conquer and surprise the heart," but here also is dramatic technique of the cleverest sort.

All the arts of the playwright are known and employed by Shakespeare. The tragedies and comedies, even those not divided into acts in the Folio, show the structural plan of the five-act drama.

1. Exposition or introduction.
2. Complication, entanglement, or rising action.
3. Climax, or turning point.
4. Resolution, untanglement, or falling action.
5. Conclusion, dénouement, or catastrophe.

The introduction, by means of the conversation of minor characters, sets forth who the main characters are, in what relation they are to each other, and in what situation they now find themselves. It also strikes the emotional keynote of the play. For example, in the very first lines of *Hamlet* the agitation of the soldiers is shown in the irregular challenge and reply; and Francisco's words "I am sick at heart" carry a foreboding of evil. In *Macbeth* the opening scene throws over the audience at once the spell of the evil forces which direct the tragedy. In *The Merchant of Venice*, a tragicomedy, Antonio is sad, while his companions are merry. So the near-disaster of the bond plot and the happiness of the love plot are both foreshadowed. Likewise, in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* the double keynote is struck in such lines as

> Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.

Similar studies might be made of well-planned climaxes and dénouements. This is not accident, nor is it inspired genius. It is intelligent, careful workmanship.

In the opening lines not only of the whole play, but

of different scenes, without the aid of scenery and with no way of darkening the stage in an inclosure open to the sky, the playwright must inform his audience of the season of the year and the hour of day or night. So one soldier says in the opening lines of *Hamlet*, "'Tis now struck twelve," the other remarks, "'Tis bitter cold," and the audience grasps the whole situation—a fortified castle in a bleak place, soldiers on guard, midnight of a cold winter night. In the first scene of the second act of *As You Like It* the place of scenery is supplied by the Duke's first words,

> Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?

and in the fourth scene the audience realizes that Rosalind and her attendants have arrived at the same place when she says,

> Well, this is the forest of Arden.

The plays are full of such reminders of time, place, and weather.

> I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
> Give guess how near to day.—*Julius Cæsar*

> The air bites shrewdly.—*Hamlet*

> The pelting of this pitiless storm.—*King Lear*

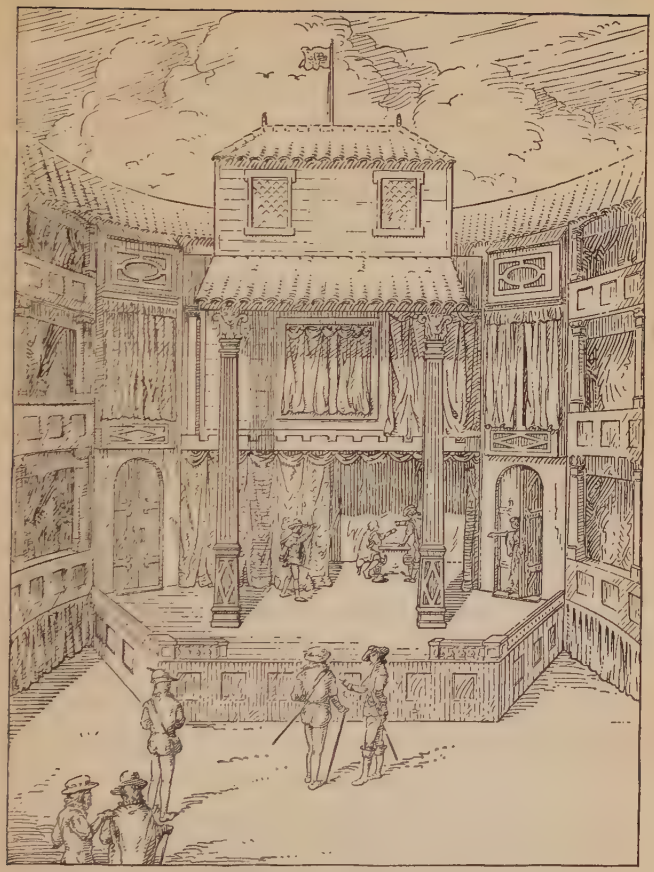
> What country, friends, is this?
> This is Illyria, lady.—*Twelfth Night*

> The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.
> *Macbeth*

The audience, having no printed programs, sometimes had to be reminded that the dramatic duration of time may be very different from the actual. In the third act of *Macbeth* the banquet begins at "seven at night." When the banquet has ended, Lady Macbeth says that the night is "almost at odds with morning, which is which," though only a few minutes have actually passed. In *The Winter's Tale*, Act II, Scene iii, Leontas says, "Twenty-three days They have been absent: 'tis good speed."

It must be remembered also that the impossibility of shutting off the platform stage from the view of the audience created many problems for the Elizabethan playwright. Since there could be no tableau effects arranged behind a curtain, the scenes must always begin and end in such a way that the actors could walk on and off the stage. If some were killed, the lines and action must be planned to provide for the removal of the bodies. If this were impracticable, then the deaths must occur off stage, as in the case of Duncan, Lady Macduff, and Mercutio. Entrances and exits in the middle of the scene might be awkward since the actor could not appear easily from wings at the side but must walk forward from one of the rear doors. Shakespeare covers this possibility of awkwardness by various devices which not only meet the situation but take advantage of it for greater dramatic effect. Sometimes he has the characters on the stage introduce those who are entering in such lines as:

> There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark.—*As You Like It*



A Typical Elizabethan Stage

Stand close awhile, for here comes one in haste.
'Tis Cinna; I do know him by his gait;
He is a friend.—*Julius Cæsar*

Here comes little Robin.—*The Merry Wives of Windsor*

How now? Who is it?
Players that offer service to your lordship.
Bid them come near.—*The Taming of the Shrew*

See where comes the breeder of my sorrow!—*3 Henry VI*

By means of the processional entrance, military or royal, and the recessional exit he produces gorgeous spectacle or dignified impressiveness. Shylock's lingering and reluctant departure from his house just before Jessica's elopement makes a most interesting exit, adding suspense and pathos to the scene. Still more artistic and impressive is Macbeth's exit from the stage when, summoned by a deep, soft stroke of the bell, he goes to murder Duncan. Sir Henry Irving, the famous actor, says: "An essay might be written on Shakespeare's exits alone. . . . No actor ever had reason to complain that Shakespeare sent him tamely off or brought him feebly on."

In Act I, Scene iv, of *Macbeth* the king has been lamenting the treachery of Cawdor in a speech ending with the words,

> He was a gentleman on whom I built
> An absolute trust.

At this moment Macbeth enters, his mind already tainted with thoughts of treason and murder, and the trusting King greets him with the words, "O worthiest

cousin!" This is an example of an entrance made effective by the use of dramatic irony. Dramatic irony occurs when the speaker or some other character is unaware of some double or contrary meaning that lurks in the words or the situation. It is a dramatic device much used by Shakespeare, especially throughout the whole tragedy of *Macbeth* and in the stories involving disguise and mistaken identity like *Twelfth Night*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *As You Like It*. One of the most interesting examples occurs in *Macbeth*, Act III, Scene i, when Macbeth says to Banquo, "Fail not our feast." Banquo replies, "My lord, I will not," being unaware, of course, of Macbeth's plan to murder him before the hour of the banquet arrives; but the irony is here doubled, for Banquo *does* appear at the feast in a form that Macbeth does not dream of.

A volume might be compiled of such illustrations of skill in the use of the playwright's art, but perhaps enough have been offered to suggest what Sir Henry Irving calls "the irresistible evidence that Shakespeare was a great dramatic constructor, who knew the stage as intimately as a watchmaker knows the mechanism of a watch."

Shakespeare's Poetic Genius

A contrary judgment is expressed by Bernard Shaw, who, comparing Shakespeare with Ibsen in "intellectual force and dramatic insight quite apart from beauty of expression," concludes: "Ibsen comes out with a double first-class, whereas Shakespeare comes out hardly anywhere. . . . If the fellow had not been a great poet,

his rubbish would have been forgotten long ago." Whatever we may think of the first part of the statement, we are glad of this testimony to the fact that Shakespeare's real claim to immortality is his poetry, for poetry, after all, is the "breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." In fact, it is impossible to separate these two elements of his genius; for his poetical power, as it is manifested in descriptive beauty, emotional, rhetorical utterance, brilliance and subtlety of dialogue, and the exquisite harmony of sheer music, is a most important factor in his dramatic power. For example, the necessity of embodying the setting in the lines instead of painting it on back drops or distributing it to the audience on printed programs is responsible for some of the most beautiful descriptive lines in the plays:

> This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses.—*Macbeth*

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> *The Merchant of Venice*

> Look, how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.—*Ibid.*

> But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.
> *Hamlet*

> Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
> *Romeo and Juliet*

> Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
> That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops . . .
> *Ibid.*

We would not exchange lines like these for painted scenery and electric lights!

The dramatist is bound by the conventional restrictions of his stage, and the poet must meet the conventional demands of his metrical form; much art is required to achieve beauty and power within these formal limitations. Shakespeare's verse form, as well as his dramatic art, shows his progress from imitation and experiment to superb mastery.

Shakespeare's Use of Verse and Prose

In the history of the English drama, rhyme as a vehicle of expression precedes blank verse and prose. Miracle plays, moral plays, and interludes are all in rhyming measures. In Shakespeare may be seen the same development. Apart from the use of rhyme in songs, lyrics, and portions of masques (as in *The Tempest*, IV, i), a progress from more to less rhyme is a sure index to Shakespeare's growth as a master of expression.

1. *Five-Stress Iambic.* In the early *Love's Labour's Lost* are more than five hundred rhyming five-stress iambic couplets; in *Twelfth Night* there are sixty; in *King Lear* thirty-seven; in *The Tempest* only one; and in *The Winter's Tale* not any. The couplets are used chiefly for the following purposes: (1) to aid in expressing strong emotion; (2) to point an epigram or a maxim; and (3), as so frequently in Elizabethan plays, to mark an exit or round off a speech. In the later plays the couplets are often merely exit tags. Alternate

rhymes in five-stress verse, or quatrains, having the effect of lyric stanzas, are found only in Shakespeare's plays written before 1600.

2. *Trochaic Verse.* Shakespeare's sense of the appropriateness of certain rhythms to the expression of certain moods and emotions may be read in the fact that he makes his supernatural beings so often express themselves in trochaic verse, with a marked preference for four-stress (tetrameter) effects. In such verse is the dialogue of the witches in *Macbeth* and the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

3. *Songs.* The rhythm of the songs is rich and varied. In many the verse is the ballad stanza of four-stress iambic measure alternating with three-stress. In the "Tell me where is fancy bred" of *The Merchant of Venice*, the "Full fathoms five thy father lies" of *The Tempest*, the rare melodic effect is in part due to the skillful weaving of trochaic and iambic rhyming lines. In many of the most exquisite songs the prevailing iambic or trochaic movement is varied by the use of anapæstic, amphibrachic, or dactylic substitutes.

In the development of the English drama the use of prose as a vehicle of expression entitled to equal rights with verse was due to Lyly. He was the first to use prose with power and distinction in original plays, and did memorable service in preparing the way for Shakespeare's achievement. Interesting attempts have been made to explain Shakespeare's distinctive use of verse and prose; and of recent years there has been much discussion of the question whether we are justified in supposing that Shakespeare was guided by any fixed

principle in his employment of verse and prose, or whether he merely employed them, as fancy suggested, for the sake of variety and relief. It is a significant fact that in many of his earlier plays there is little or no prose, and that the proportion of prose to blank verse increases with the decrease of rhyme. Five kinds of prose may be distinguished in the plays: (1) The prose of formal documents, as in letters and proclamations. (2) The prose of 'low life' and the speech of comic characters. This is a development of the humorous prose found, for example, in Greene's comedies that deal with humble life. (3) The colloquial prose of dialogue. Shakespeare was "the creator of colloquial prose, of the prose most appropriate for drama" (Churton Collins). (4) The prose of abnormal mentality. (5) Impassioned or highly wrought poetical and rhetorical prose. But the form which Shakespeare was to develop to stupendous power and transcendent beauty was unrhymed iambic pentameter or blank verse. In the earlier plays the lines tended to be regular and end-stopped, the sentence or clause coinciding with the line; for example,

> Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
> Till that I'll view the manners of the town,
> . . . . . .
> And then return and sleep within mine inn.
>
> *The Comedy of Errors*

In the plays of the middle period, such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, there is less monotonous regularity and an increasing tendency to carry

on the sense from one line to another (run-on verse, or enjambement), giving flexibility, superb movement, and a richer and fuller melody. In this period Shakespeare overtook and passed his contemporaries in his mastery of poetic form. After reading Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, the poet, William Watson, writes:

> Your Marlowe's page I close, my Shakespeare's ope.
> How welcome—after gong and cymbals' din—
> The continuity, the long slow slope
> And vast curves of the gradual violin.

In still later plays the blank verse breaks away from bondage to formal line limits and sweeps all along with it in freedom, power, and organic unity. Take, for example, a passage from the soliloquy of Brutus just after he has pledged himself to the conspiracy:

> 'Tis a common proof,
> That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
> Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
> But when he once attains the upmost round,
> He then unto the ladder turns his back,
> Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
> By which he did ascend.[1]

Here we have a full, rounded period in which all the elements seem to have been adjusted, and the whole expression set in order, before any part of it was written down. The beginning foresees the end, the end remembers the beginning, and the thought and image are evolved together in an even, continuous flow. The thing

[1] *Julius Cæsar*, II, i.

is indeed perfect in its way, still it is not in Shakespeare's latest and highest style. Now take a passage from *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV, Scene iv, the boyish speech of Florizel to Perdita:

> When you speak, sweet,
> I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
> I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
> Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,
> To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that; move still, still so,
> And own no other function.

Here the workmanship seems to make and shape itself as it goes along, thought kindling thought, and image prompting image, and each part neither concerning itself with what has gone before, nor with what is coming after. The very sweetness has a certain piercing quality, and we taste it from clause to clause, almost from word to word, as so many keen darts of poetic rapture shot forth in rapid succession. Yet the passage, notwithstanding its swift changes of imagery and motion, is perfect in unity and continuity. On the other hand, the poet, with masterly dexterity, adapts the same form, iambic pentameter blank verse, to the give and take of rapid dialogue. For example, in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene i, we have the following:

> Bassanio. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
> To excuse the current of thy cruelty.
> Shylock. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.
> Bassanio. Do all men kill the things they do not love?
> Shylock. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO. Every offence is not a hate at first.
SHYLOCK. What, would'st thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Broken lines, feminine lines, substitution of other kinds of feet than the iambic, and other irregularities are used for variety and artistic effect.

Shakespeare's Psychological Powers

Language and form, however, are but the outer wrappings of real poetry. The poet's thoughts and emotions "scorch through all the folds of expression." In this, its highest aspect, therefore, Shakespeare's poetic art cannot be separated from his psychological power. His poetic genius lies not in facility of expression merely, but in sublimity of imagination and wisdom of life, and these he employs with consummate power to sway the emotions and impress the souls of his audience. In every instance of his revision of old plays he alters the false psychology and humanizes the whole, transforming the crude puerility of the old *Taming of a Shrew* into genuine comedy, and the violent melodrama of the old play *King Lear* into eternal tragedy. Before Shakespeare, insanity was looked upon as a comic element; he makes it human and pathetic. The Jew in literature was an object of ridicule or hatred; but Shakespeare's true psychology makes Shylock, like all human beings, a mixture of good and bad. In one scene the audience is aghast at his villainy; in another it admires him for his self-respecting, defiant pride; in a third it wavers between fear that he will triumph and pity for him in

his defeat. This is not the portrayal of a consistent character—human beings are not consistent. Such characterization possesses something better than consistency, and that is reality.

All the characters, from the kings to the most insignificant servants and messengers, are real. Macduff's talkative, manly little son, though he has not even a name, is distinctly an individual. So are sleepy little Lucius and the eloquent servant whom Portia chaffs for his showy rhetoric.

There is nothing more refreshing than the humorous character parts in Shakespeare. The humor of turgid evil, of licentious themes, of social satire, soon becomes obsolete; but the world has never ceased to laugh at the gravediggers in *Hamlet*, at Dogberry and Verges, at Falstaff, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the rest. No other writer has such range and variety of humor. In a single play, and that a tragedy, we find the naïve absurdity of simple-minded servants, the coruscating word-play of Mercutio, and the side-shaking mirth of the old nurse, who cannot be called back to the matter in hand until she has relished to the full her old joke. In the broad scope of Shakespeare's humanity there is buffoonery as well as reflection, coarseness as well as exquisiteness. Fundamentally, Shakespeare's humor is rooted in the perpetual paradox of human existence, the incongruity between the actual and the ideal, the strange mixing of the tragic with the comic in life, of the things of eternity with the things of half a minute. Note, on the following page, the lines in Act I, Scene i, of *Romeo and Juliet*:

ABRAHAM. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
SAMPSON. I do bite my thumb, sir.
ABRAHAM. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
SAMPSON. [*Aside to* GREGORY] Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

This absurd and vulgar thumb-biter, eager to convey insult if he may do it safely, is genuinely comic, but he precipitates the whole series of events which make a heart-rending tragedy. Note as another example of the humor of incongruity *1 Henry IV*, Act III, Scene i:

GLENDOWER. (*With pompous but sincere solemnity*) I can call spirits from the vasty deep!
HOTSPUR. (*Matter-of-factly*) Why, so can I or so can any man, But will they come?

No severer test of the essential and permanent reality of the characters in both tragedy and comedy could be devised than the recent successful performances of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* in modern dress. Katharina and Petruchio are just as convincingly human, though they travel by automobile and include among their household furnishings a vacuum-cleaner, a telephone, and a radio. And, what is much more remarkable, the audience finds itself taking the famous soliloquy with the utmost interest and seriousness, though the ultra-modern Hamlet is reclining on a yellow sofa, smoking a cigarette!

A great while ago the world began,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

and all through the wind and the rain of the centuries, though there has been rush and change, yet the change has been one of form, trappings, and costumes. Humanity is identical all down the ages.

Nor is Shakespeare's psychological power limited to the real and the natural. He draws upon the realm of the unreal and impresses into his service fairies and sprites like Puck and Ariel, subhuman monsters like Caliban, and supernatural beings like ghosts and witches. In the tragedies he makes use of natural and unnatural phenomena of the external world—rain, wind, thunder, lightning, earthquakes, cries of owls, shrieks of horses—to produce his psychological effects. Music he employs, not merely for decoration, but as an integral part of the drama to pervade the atmosphere of the scene with peace, gayety, or melancholy, to heighten tragic horror, sometimes, even, to give utterance to an excess of emotion beyond the power of words to express. So intimately was the music associated with the lines and the action that the players from the orchestra frequently appeared upon the stage as participants in the scene, sometimes even taking a minor part in the dialogue.

All these elements of character, setting, incident, and poetic expression Shakespeare's transcendent art weaves together into one marvelous emotional effect, one vast unity of impression. Each comedy is a gay tapestry of rich colors; each tragedy is a chapter out of the history of humanity, a revelation of universal law, a challenge to the emotional and spiritual capacity of the reader.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Define lyric, epic, drama, tragedy, comedy, episode, and dramatic irony.

2. Mention several uses which episodes and other interpolations may serve.

3. Mention the various functions performed by the introduction of a play. Illustrate from Shakespeare's plays and others.

4. Discuss these statements:

a. Poets (and dramatists) like Shakespeare are "born not made." *Poeta nascitur, non fit* (Horace).

b. Shakespeare was a plagiarist.

5. Explain how Shakespeare met some of the peculiar requirements of the Elizabethan stage.

6. In the following lines from Shakespeare's songs note the lyrical charm and the variety and skillful handling of metrical forms. Choose two or three to memorize.

From *Much Ado about Nothing*:

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never:
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

From *The Tempest*:

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

From *The Winter's Tale*:

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

From *Twelfth Night*:

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

From *As You Like It*:

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

From *Cymbeline*:

Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise;
Arise, arise!

7. Every student should know the half-dozen metrical patterns upon which practically all English poetry is built. If you do not know them, consult Tanner's *Composition and Rhetoric* or some similar text.

[VII]

Shakespeare's Fame

There, Shakespeare, on whose forehead climb
The crowns o' the world; O, eyes sublime,
With tears and laughter for all time.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

During Shakespeare's Lifetime

There is a common misconception that Shakespeare's genius was not discovered until after his death. This is far from being the case. His personal popularity during his lifetime has already been shown in Chapter V. To understand the contemporary appreciation of his literary work it is necessary to stop for a brief explanation of the customs of the time regarding publication.

The narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, were the only works of Shakespeare published during his lifetime with his sanction and coöperation. His sonnets, it appears, were privately circulated, until, after fifteen years, they were published without his consent. The narrative poems were so eagerly purchased that seven editions of *Venus and Adonis* and five editions of *Lucrece* appeared before 1616, the year of the poet's death.

Plays, however, were not written to be published. They were for acting in the theatre and were liable to

interpolations from the actors and improvements by the managers. For when a play was sold, it became the manager's property outright and, for his personal interest, was kept out of print as long as it drew audiences to the theatre. There was no law of copyright, however, and printers and publishers were not scrupulous about obtaining material in any way possible, often at the expense of authors. In this procedure it seems they were protected by their guild, the Stationers' Company, who alone had the legal right to license all publications. Consequently, printers secured prompters' copies of plays or even had reporters take them down in shorthand[1] during a performance and published them in small pamphlets known as Quartos, so called because the page was one fourth the size of the standard printers' sheet. These were printed without the authority of the author and, as Heywood tells us, "against their [the actors'] peculiar profit." In 1637 the Earl of Pembroke ordered the Master of the Stationers' Company to prevent the printing of certain plays of the King's Men on the ground that such publication "would tend directly to their detriment." Shakespeare, while he gave scrupulous attention to the printing of his poems, allowed his plays to be pirated without legal protest. True, the legal prosecution would have involved many difficulties, and public opinion would have scoffed at the idea of defending what it regarded as ephemeral writing. We have Quarto editions of seventeen of Shakespeare's plays.

[1] Some by stenography drew
The plot; put it in print; scarce one word trew.
HEYWOOD

In 1623, seven years after the poet's death, a practically complete edition, containing thirty-six plays of Shakespeare's, was brought out. The manuscripts of those hitherto unpublished were obtained, in all probability, from members of Shakespeare's company of actors. Two of these, John Heminge and Henry Condell, were among Shakespeare's dearest friends; and in the foreword "To the Great Variety of Readers" we read, over their signatures, words of appreciation and deep regard. This volume, known as the First Folio, is dedicated to the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Montgomery, "both Knights of the most Noble Order of the Garter." It is the most noteworthy single volume in the history of the text of Shakespeare. The Second Folio appeared in 1632; the Third Folio, in 1663; the Fourth Folio, in 1685.

The following are a few of the many quotations showing the prevailing opinion of Shakespeare's work on the part of his contemporaries: Greene's criticism in 1592 and Chettle's answer are recorded in Chapter IV. Francis Meres, a learned graduate of Cambridge University, wrote in 1598:

> The sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare. Witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugared sonnets among his private friends. As Plautus and Terence are accounted best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the best in both kinds for the stage.

In *The Return from Parnassus*, a play acted in St. John's College, Cambridge, about 1601, Kempe, the

famous actor, speaking of the works of the university-trained dramatists, exclaims, "Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, ay, and Ben Jonson, too."

Heminge and Condell, in the preface to the First Folio, declare that Shakespeare's readers include all classes "from the most able to him that can but spell. . . . His mind and hand went together; and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarcely received from him a blot in his papers."

Ben Jonson deplores the ease and fluency of Shakespeare's style, which he considers sometimes too careless, unrestrained, and uncritical, and says that if no passages are blotted out and rewritten, a thousand should be. But, after all, it is Ben who writes:

> I confess thy writings to be such
> As neither man nor muse can praise too much.
>
> Soul of the age,
> The applause, delight, and wonder of our stage!
>
> Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
> To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.

Mr. Sidney Lee, a modern authority on Shakespeare's life and times, says of the Elizabethan public, "Even those who, to assuage their own consciences, entered formal protest against his innovations, soon swelled the chorus of praise with which his work was welcomed by contemporary playgoers, cultured and uncultured alike." Besides the comments of writers and critics the best proof, after all, of contemporary appreciation is the

fact that his plays were presented to crowded houses, and that his share of the box-office receipts in a few years made him a wealthy man.

The Three Centuries following Shakespeare's Death

Before 1640 John Hales, a scholar and philosopher, in a public debate held with men of learning in his rooms at Eton, successfully maintained that "there was no subject of which any poet ever writ but he could produce it much better done in Shakespeare." Leonard Digges in 1640 asserted that every revival of Shakespeare's plays drew crowds to pit, boxes, and galleries alike. At a little later date Shakespeare's plays were "the closest companions of Charles I's solitudes." In the same century many other appreciations of Shakespeare were published, notably Milton's and Dryden's. Samuel Pepys, author of the world's most naïve and entertaining diary, saw thirty-six performances of Shakespeare's plays in a period of about eight years. His comments on *The Tempest*, of which he witnessed six performances in six months, are worth recording:

> Nov. 7, 1667. Up, and at the office hard all the morning, and at noon resolved with Sir W. Pen to go see "The Tempest," an old play of Shakespeare's. The House mighty full; the King and Court there: and the most innocent play that ever I saw; and a curious piece of musique in an echo of half sentences, the echo repeating the former half, while the man goes on to the latter; which is mighty pretty. The play has no great wit, but yet good, above ordinary plays.

Nove. 13, 1667. Thence home to dinner, and as soon as dinner done I and my wife and Willet to the Duke of York's house, and there saw the Tempest again, which is very pleasant, and full of so good variety that I cannot be more pleased in a comedy, only the seamen's part a little too tedious.

Dec. 12, 1667. After dinner I all alone to the Duke of York's house, and saw "The Tempest," which, as often as I have seen it, I do like very well, and the house very full.

Feb. 3, 1668. At noon home to dinner, and thence after dinner to the Duke of York's house, to the play, "The Tempest," which we have often seen, but yet I was pleased again, and shall be again to see it, it is so full of variety, and particularly this day I took pleasure to learn the tune of the seaman's dance, which I have much desired to be perfect in, and have made myself so.

April 30, 1668. Thence I to the Duke of York's playhouse, and there I saw "The Tempest," which still pleases me mightily.

May 11, 1668. To the Duke of York's playhouse, and there saw "The Tempest," and between two acts, I went out to Mr. Harris, and got him to repeat to me the words of the Echo, while I writ them down, having tried in the play to have wrote them; but, when I had done it, having done it without looking upon my paper, I find I could not read the blacklead. But now I have got the words clear, and, in going in thither, had the pleasure to see the actors in their several dresses, especially the seamen and monster, which were very droll: so into the play again.

The spirit of the next century, the eighteenth, was out of tune with Shakespeare's genius. Our old friend George the Third spoke not for himself alone when he said: "Was there ever such stuff as great part of Shakespeare? What think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What, what?" Under the influence of French

literature the writers of the age of Pope emphasized logical coherence, polished regularity, emotional restraint, and adherence to conventional rules and the classic unities. Their standard of excellence in poetic form was the end-stopped classical couplet, each a polished entity. They deplored the looseness of Shakespeare's verse, the mixture of tragic and comic, the unpolished naturalness of his thoughts and speech, the exaggeration and emotional violence of his scenes.

But, in spite of their disapproval of Shakespeare's style, they could not let him alone. They discussed, rewrote, edited, and produced his plays. Even in their eyes his power transcended his faults. Voltaire, the famous French writer and critic, called him a barbarian, "grand fou," "an intoxicated savage"; yet Voltaire studied Shakespeare thoroughly, was profoundly influenced by him, and boasted of having been the first to introduce him effectively to the French public. Editions of the plays increased as education and the demand of the middle class for literature were extended. David Garrick, the greatest actor of the century, became avowedly a Shakespeare enthusiast, threw all the force of his keen intelligence, his boundless energy, and his histrionic genius into the presentation of Shakespeare's plays, and, at his death in 1779, was buried in Westminster Abbey at the foot of Shakespeare's statue.

The next swing around the spiral brought the world back to complete accord with the great Elizabethan. The Romanticists of the early nineteenth century, reacting from classical standards, reveling in freedom,

sentiment, individualism, love of nature and of all human life, found in Shakespeare the consummate expresser of all its ideals and did not stop in its adoration of him "on this side idolatry." This attitude was represented in England by such writers as Lamb, Coleridge, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Leigh Hunt, and Swinburne; in Germany by Schiller, Schlegel, Heine, Goethe, and many others. In their minute dissections and analyses of the plays under the radiant light of reverent admiration, they discovered, it must be admitted, many merits which were not there. Yet they revealed, also, much of beauty and genius that had escaped previous notice, for they brought to their study penetrating intelligence, sound literary judgment, and that sympathetic understanding to which alone a great poet reveals his whole message. Some felt, with Coleridge, that the genius of Shakespeare, like all great natural phenomena, was no fit subject for adverse criticism. Others almost went so far as to maintain the impossibility of Shakespeare's having any faults at all. They felt that every passage, properly understood, contained beauty and wisdom; when they found lines obviously lacking in either, they declared that some other hand must have written them.

The critics of the later nineteenth century, projecting into Shakespeare's mind and works the interest in mental and moral psychology which characterized their own period, ascribed to him a profound and consistent system of ethics and philosophy which he did not possess and read into the lines and characterizations preachments and moral lessons which he could never have intended.

Instead of accepting the characters as normal, faulty human beings, all the more interesting and alive because of their faults, they endeavored to divide them into the good and the bad, idealizing the good and stigmatizing the bad after the fashion of the nineteenth century novels, unmindful of the fact that such questions as, "Was it right for Antonio to spit on Shylock, or for Bassanio to live beyond his means, for Jessica to steal her father's jewels, or for Portia to win her case on a legal technicality?" would never have occurred to Shakespeare nor to the Elizabethan audience. Students in schools felt that they must take as deep philosophical truth the wise saws in Polonius's advice to Laertes; that they should not really like Falstaff because he was wicked; and that even Puck behaved quite reprehensibly in indulging in so much mischief and deception. Critics discussed the characters as independent beings, with pasts, futures, personal characteristics, and moral attributes outside the play. They wrote volumes on "Was Hamlet really insane?" or "Was Shylock really a noble character?" forgetting that such questions have no meaning apart from the dramatist's purpose and intention.

Shakespeare at the Present Time

Some of this disposition to find in Shakespeare a faultless poet and moral teacher has held over to the present time; on the other hand, there has been the inevitable reaction from such extravagance and overemphasis, as well as the usual revolt against whatever has become traditional from a preceding age. Both of

these tendencies, however, are currents of prejudice, running, one with, the other contrary to, the great natural tide of increasing interest in Shakespeare and appreciation of his dramatic art and poetic genius.[1] The revolt of realism and skepticism was slight and temporary, lasting for a scant two decades; and the disposition to ethical hair-splitting has, for the most part, been swallowed up in the conviction that Shakespeare's plays are soundly and integrally but not deliberately nor consistently moral.

Another important and significant development in more recent years has been the tendency to combine with æsthetic appreciation the spirit of scientific inquiry and investigation, a spirit which has led to the discovery of new facts and documents bearing upon the life of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan theatre. Most notable and successful in this line have been the researches of an American scholar, Professor C. W. Wallace of the University of Nebraska. In the study of Shakespeare in schools this spirit of intellectual inquiry manifests itself in a growing tendency to stress knowledge of the background as important in interpreting particular passages and in understanding the plays more nearly as they were understood by Elizabethan audiences.. They are studied less as literature and more as drama in the original sense of the word (δράω, do;

[1] An interesting cross current in the Shakespeare criticism of the nineteenth century is to be found in the Bacon controversy. It seems of too little importance at the present time to be discussed here. Students interested will find clear presentations of the subject in *An Introduction to Shakespeare*, by MacCracken, Pierce & Durham, and in *Shakespeare's Life and Work* by Sidney Lee.

'drama,' doing or action); with less analysis of the diction and more appreciation of spectacle, action, poetic imagination, and dramaturgic effects. In some schools, courses in Shakespeare have become practically courses in dramatics, in which, after thorough study and rehearsal for intelligent interpretation, several plays a year are actually produced with simple but effective staging. On the other hand, Shakespeare's plays as literature are still regarded as the highest achievement in our language, and hundreds of readers in libraries, homes, and classrooms enjoy them without seeing them performed on the stage.

As Schopenhauer points out, any work great enough to be immortal must comprise so many excellences that no one person and no one period can appreciate them all. Some are recognized and honored at one time, others at another. Thus with continued shifting of interest, the work, "esteemed now in this direction and then in that, maintains itself through the long centuries." It has come about in the "continued shifting of interest" that the idealized Shakespeare of the nineteenth century makes no such appeal to this second quarter of the twentieth as does the hearty, exuberant, friendly Shakespeare of the Mermaid Tavern with his frank and free interest in everything human. This is an age of colorful life, intense activity, and material achievement; of experiments in writing in prose, poetry, and drama; and of eagerness for amusement, especially the amusement of sports and the theatre. In all this it is Elizabethan. In literature it is an age of naturalness, of impatience with rules and conventions, of

freedom and originality of expression, of emotional candor and unrestraint. In this it is Shakespearian. As a playwright, Shakespeare is more nearly "modern" than Pinero, Galsworthy, Shaw, Ibsen, or Barrie. The popularity of Shakespeare productions in community theatres and the recent experiments with various methods of presentation on the professional stage are an interesting development in contemporary drama. When actors and directors have solved the problem of interpreting the real spirit and genius of Shakespeare to the modern audience as effectively as they were interpreted to the audience of similar taste at the Globe, may it, perhaps, come to pass that Shakespeare will draw all classes of people from musical comedies, moving-picture shows, and baseball games, as in that other age, so like our own, he drew the crowds from the bear-baiting, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting exhibitions to witness the beauty and buffoonery of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the tragic horror of *Macbeth* and *King Lear*?

Suggestive Questions

1. Can you see any meaning in Pope's statement that Shakespeare "grew immortal in his own despite"?

2. Discuss these propositions, giving details and concrete illustrations:

a. There is no subject of which any poet ever writ but it is much better done in Shakespeare.

b. Both the Elizabethan and the modern age are periods of experiment in prose, poetry, and drama.

c. Both are characterized by colorful life, intense activity, and material achievement.

3. Read again the comment of George the Third on Shakespeare (page 133) and that of Mrs. Browning at the head of this chapter. Which do you incline to? Why?

4. Show that a play of Shakespeare's is better worth while or more genuinely satisfying as entertainment than a vaudeville show or photoplay.

5. What plays of Shakespeare's have you seen on the stage? Do you think they were performed in the Elizabethan spirit with the effects that Shakespeare intended?

6. Do you think the prophetic suggestion in the last paragraph of the chapter is likely to be fulfilled? Give two good reasons for your answer.

7. Make a report to the class on recent experiments in the presentation of Shakespeare's plays. (By means of the Reader's Guide index find some of the many illustrated articles on this subject in recent magazines.)

[VIII]

Study Helps

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability.

Sir Francis Bacon

Methods of Study

The methods of study in any subject are determined by the aims or purposes. What, then, are the aims of the study of literature? First of all, as Bacon says, is delight—not cheap entertainment but genuine and satisfying pleasure with the development of a capacity for future pleasure; just as one studies music or any of the arts to find in them a present and a permanent source of interest and æsthetic delight.

Second, we study literature for education, for mental breadth and background. Everybody wishes to possess as large a share as possible of the common body of knowledge both contemporary and traditional. We all desire to become partakers of our own civilization, so much of which is made up of contributions from the past, tested, matured, and seasoned by time.

The third aim of literary study is what we may call, for want of a better name, culture,—the humanization of knowledge, that deepening and enrichment of the intellectual and emotional life that comes from associ-

ation with the beauty, the power, the humanism, the permanent and essential truth of all great literature. No method of study is successful which does not achieve these three aims in a satisfactory degree and proportion.

Perhaps a brief survey of the various methods which have been used in studying Shakespeare may be helpful. Fifty or sixty years ago Shakespeare's plays were not read or studied in schools, though his complete works, in almost unreadably fine print, were to be found in most American homes. Nor did the young student of that time learn his Shakespeare from the stage, for we were not then a theatre-going people. The only Shakespeare offered to pupils was an occasional short passage, without context or explanation, placed in a school reader as an exercise to be read aloud.

Less than fifty years ago appeared the first school editions of complete plays of Shakespeare, and from that time various methods of study, some good, some bad, have prevailed. There was the over-scholarly period, when exhaustive study was made of sources of plots, probable dates of publication, variations in the texts of Quartos and Folios, emendations by different editors, and peculiarities of the Elizabethan language. At the other extreme was the appreciative or æsthetic method, which often resulted in discussing each speech or incident in a spirit of enthusiastic admiration, finding perfection of expression in every passage and a moral lesson in every character. Such a method, lacking the sanity of cool judgment and the balance of sound scholarship, appealed to the sentimental but antagonized the sensible students.

Then there was the fad for the mechanics of play structure, when every class was furnished with Freytag's *Technique of the Drama*, and blackboards were covered with ascending and descending lines.

After that, or along with it, appeared the method which still prevails in many schools, the study of a Shakespearian play as a piece of literary diction, to be taken, one passage at a time, and paraphrased and analyzed for its vocabulary, allusions, and figures of speech. Such analysis, revealing as it did a wealth of poetic beauty, was to many keen-minded students a source of wonder and delight; but all too often it resulted, unfortunately, in much bewilderment and boredom. Many pupils who worked by this piecemeal method have no realization of any work of Shakespeare's as a complete, organized *play* in metrical form.

This method, however, was not superficial, and, on the whole, it is to be preferred to the procedure of reading stumblingly and unintelligently, in turn or in dialogue, with a few shallow comments on the passage read. No class or group should ever hear Shakespeare read except with intelligent understanding of the sense, good vocal interpretation of the lines, and a fine consciousness of the rhythm.

Ten or fifteen years ago came the vogue of courses in modern or current literature, a reasonable and progressive movement, until it was carried so far that the plays of Shakespeare were removed from the curriculum to make room for such modern reading as *The Great Divide*, *The Gentleman from Indiana*, and *Mr. Britling Sees it Through*. This novel movement prevailed for

several years until time began to show that most current literature is indeed *current*, that ten years after being so carefully studied most of it is either entirely forgotten or regarded as insignificant by the literary world.

Through all these vicissitudes there has been much wise, enthusiastic, and profitable study of Shakespeare, and appreciation of his works has steadily increased. The very children know Ariel, Puck, Titania, and Oberon, and they sing in school *Hark, Hark the Lark*; *Who is Sylvia*; and *Over Hill, Over Dale*. A Shakespeare-mindedness prevails throughout the English-speaking world, particularly in America.

Approaching the Study of the Plays

To select what is good in the various methods of study developed through this half century, avoiding their errors and exaggerations, is the problem of the class or group which undertakes the study of Shakespeare. The following questions are designed to suggest a profitable method of approaching the study of the plays as a whole.

General Questions on Shakespeare's Plays

1. Which of the plays that you have read have a single, unified plot? Which have complicated, interwoven plots?

2. Which might be called 'one-man' plays? In which is the interest so divided that it is difficult to say who is the main character?

3. Discuss the children in Shakespeare's plays, with as many examples as possible.

4. Discuss the fools in Shakespeare's plays, with as many examples as possible.

5. Discuss the following statements as true or false. Make your discussion concrete and specific, full of detail and illustration.

a. Shakespeare's chief claim to immortality is his poetry.

b. Shakespeare's chief claim to immortality is his understanding of human nature.

6. What general truths about human nature, its weaknesses and vagaries, its merits, mistakes, and motives have you been impressed with in any play, any character, or any group of characters? For example, the character of Hamlet; Lear and Cordelia; Malvolio and the group about him in *Twelfth Night.*

7. The following general questions on Shakespeare are taken from recent College Entrance Board examinations:[1]

a. (1) In a tragedy of Shakespeare's describe the comic characters. (2) In a comedy of Shakespeare's describe the leading tragic or serious characters.

b. In the plays of Shakespeare with which you are familiar prove the importance of some of the minor characters.

c. Write a composition of four hundred words on craft and cruelty as exemplified in any one or more of these dramas.

d. In a play of Shakespeare with which you are familiar choose some moment of importance to the hero. Tell as fully as you can why, at this moment, the hero acts as he does.

e. "Men at some time are masters of their fates." Apply the foregoing thought to a character in one of Shakespeare's plays.

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f. Show to what degree the outcome of any Shakespearian tragedy results from the character of the hero.

g. For what qualities other than its humor do you find one of Shakespeare's comedies attractive?

h. Quote from Shakespeare at least ten consecutive lines; give their setting and tell why to you the lines seem worth committing to memory.

i. Write a letter describing (or discussing) the performance of one of Shakespeare's plays. (150 words or more.)

8. Discuss one or more interesting friendships in Shakespeare's plays.

A Special Study of Three Plays

The following questions suggest a method of studying a representative play of each of the three types,—comedy, history, and tragedy. For a definition of the three types see Chapter VI; for a complete list of the three kinds of plays in chronological order consult the chart on pages 84–87.

The Merchant of Venice

For figures of speech, classical allusions, and other details that need explanation use the notes in some well-annotated edition. The references in the following questions are to the *New Hudson Shakespeare*, published by Ginn and Company.

ACT I

Scene I

1. Picture the three men who enter first, their costumes, and their manner of entrance. What words show that the conversation began before the entrance?

2. Scan line 1 and line 8; that is, read them so as to show the regular five-stress meter.

3. Do not miss the poetic beauty of such passages as lines 8–14. Get the sea picture in detail. Explain the phrase "the pageants of the sea." Passages about the sea were particularly popular with Elizabethans. Why?

4. Which is the gayer and more talkative, Salanio or Salarino?

5. *Line 53.* Did you ever hear a parrot laugh? In what way is the comparison good?

6. Show the good stage art in the entrance and exits, lines 57, 68, and 112. This is graceful and effective on the modern stage.

7. What is the purpose of the "rhyme tag" at the end of the scene? See Chapter VI, p. 117.

8. What are the three explanations given of Antonio's melancholy? Which do you think is the nearest to the true one?

9. Why not omit the first part of the scene and have the play begin with line 119?

10. Show that the two keynotes of the play are struck in this first scene.

Scene II

1. In Shakespeare's day, on which stage was this scene probably set? How might it be staged to-day? What properties would be necessary?

2. Describe Portia from the hints already given in the lines of Scene i. Compare Portia's first words with Antonio's.

3. What impression do you form of Portia from (1) her attitude towards her father's will, (2) her remarks about the suitors, (3) her manner to Nerissa?

4. Show how the dialogue leads up to a climax.

5. How would Portia say lines 106–107?

6. Note again how the exit is managed at the end of this scene.

7. Show how the two keynotes struck in Scene i are carried on in Scene ii.

Scene iii

1. On which stage of Shakespeare's theatre would this scene take place?

2. Picture Shylock; describe your picture. (Tradition gives him red hair, and for many years actors playing the part wore a red wig.) Show the artistic contrast in appearance and manner between him and Bassanio.

3. *Lines 37 ff.* Describe the grouping of the characters. How would opportunity be given for this soliloquy of Shylock's?

4. What two reasons does Shylock give for proposing such an unusual bond (lines 137 and 160)? Is either his real reason?

5. How does Bassanio feel about the terms of the bond? How would he say line 134? Does Antonio share Bassanio's suspicion of Shylock's motive?

6. Shylock's speech, lines 98–121, is a fine piece of dramatic diction. Practice reading it until you can interpret its meaning and spirit as a good actor does. Be prepared to lead a class discussion on details of this speech, asking questions, commenting on the answers, etc.

7. Show how Act I has performed the various functions of a good introduction. See Chapter VI, p. 110. What two plots are started?

8. Give the incidents of the main plot and of the subplot as recorded in the introduction.

ACT II

Scene I

1. Describe the stage picture.

2. Scan the first line.

3. Explain the pun or play on words in line 20.

4. What is Morocco's manner: quiet, dignified, proud, courtly; or hot-blooded, impulsive, dramatic, full of action and gesture?

Scene II

1. Where was Launcelot mentioned in Act I?

2. How would Launcelot act out his first speech?

3. Mention several of the 'confusions' which Launcelot tries with his father.

4. Show by four or five illustrations what a 'Gobboism' is.

5. Note that a third plot is started in lines 164–165 and a fourth suggested in lines 187–192.

Scene III

What purposes are served by this scene?

Scene IV

1. Explain the plan for the elopement. Why is it a good one?

2. Note the action accompanying lines 15 and 19.

3. What impression have you of Jessica? Show that it has been given (1) by Jessica herself; (2) by Launcelot; (3) by Lorenzo.

Scene V

1. Two students should act out the first nine lines to show the meaning.

2. *Lines 22 ff.* Is Launcelot trying 'confusions' again?

3. *Line 38.* Is this line inconsistent with one earlier in the play? If so, in what way?

4. What impression of Shylock do you get from his first speech and his last speech in this scene?

5. From line 35 to the end of the scene what different emotions does the audience experience?

6. How would Jessica say her last words: gleefully and triumphantly, or sorrowfully and regretfully?

Scene vi

1. Should you judge Jessica's theft and elopement on moral grounds? Why or why not? If you did, what judgment should you make?

2. Do you agree with Lorenzo's remarks about Jessica, lines 52–57?

3. *Line 63:* "'Tis nine o'clock." What events have taken place during the afternoon and evening of this day?

Scene vii

1. Picture the scene. What properties would be required to stage it to-day?

2. From your previous impression of Morocco could you guess which casket he would choose?

3. Show what a good actor would do to prevent these speeches of Morocco's from seeming long and tedious.

4. Does Portia know which is the right casket?

5. What would she 'register' during the Prince's speech, lines 13–35? lines 59–60?

6. What is your impression of Morocco now (1) from Scene i? (2) from the reasoning which led him to choose the gold casket? (3) from the manner of his departure?

Scene viii

1. *Lines 1–24.* How would the two young men act out these lines?

2. What sudden change of mood occurs near the middle of the scene?

3. What two bits of interesting information does this scene impart?

4. What does it add to your impression of Antonio?

5. How does the Jessica-Lorenzo plot connect with the bond plot? Note line 25.

6. Mention several reasons why Jessica's elopement was particularly distressing to her father.

Scene ix

1. What is Arragon's line of argument?

2. Which do you like better, Arragon or Morocco? Why? Which is the better loser?

3. What changes may be made so that this casket scene will not be just like the earlier one?

4. What do you think of Portia's attitude in these scenes? Has she any excuse for being a little bitter? Is all this hard for her?

5. *Lines 85 ff.* See how this servant is individualized. What is noticeable in his speech and manner?

6. What characteristics of Portia's appear in her manner to him, lines 84 and 95–99?

ACT III

Scene I

1. What would the Elizabethans particularly enjoy about this scene?

2. How does the modern audience or reader feel towards Shylock in this scene?

3. Does Shakespeare seem to share the general attitude of his time toward Jews? (See lines 46–63 and 106.)

4. *Lines 46–63.* This passage proves that Shakespeare can write good prose as well as good verse. Point out ways in which this is good.

Scene II

1. Find in this scene three climaxes or moments of crisis in three different plots.

2. In the dialogue here point out lines containing three things that the Elizabethans especially liked: (1) a contest of wit in which the speakers try to outdo each other in plays on words; (2) speech decorated with figurative language and classical allusions; (3) the declaiming of some rather obvious or commonplace line of thought.

3. What idea does the song suggest to Bassanio? Who had chosen the song? Would the Elizabethan audience object to this as unfair or dishonorable? Do you?

4. How would the Elizabethan attitude towards lines 149–174 be different from the modern?

5. What method has the dramatist used throughout the play to portray Antonio's character?

6. Note the artistic effect of the parallel subplot (lines 186–212), a device which Shakespeare often employs.

7. Discuss this as a true or false statement: Shylock origi-

nally drew up the bond "in merry sport" or to buy Antonio's favor, but changed to malice and revenge after Jessica's theft and desertion.

Scene III

1. What does Antonio say is Shylock's reason for hating him? Is that the only reason?

2. Why may not the Duke release Antonio from the bond?

3. Has Antonio any sense of humor? Note lines 32–34.

Scene IV

1. What similarity is there between Lorenzo's first speech and other speeches in the play?

2. Does Portia have her plan already in mind or does she hope that Doctor Bellario will take up the case and find a solution?

3. In what respects so far is Portia like a 'modern' girl? In what respects different?

Scene V

1. Find here several illustrations of the Elizabethan relish for 'tricksy words.'

2. Which is wittier and more interesting, the conversation of Lorenzo and Jessica or that of Portia and Bassanio? Read sections to illustrate your answer.

ACT IV

Scene I

1. Picture the scene with costuming and setting. What properties are necessary?

2. *Lines 16–34.* Put this speech into modern prose such as a judge of the court might use to-day in addressing the plaintiff in such a case.

3. *Lines 103–106.* Was the Duke in the plot to save Antonio? How else can you account for this statement? Was Doctor Bellario in the plot?

4. What is the climax, or turning point, of this scene? Why?

5. Lines 275–276 may be compared with what lines in Act III, Scene iii?

6. What constitutes the humor in lines 277–287? Show that this is an example of dramatic irony. (See page 115.)

7. *Lines 341–358.* This is a fine passage of blank verse, moving on smoothly and powerfully to a climax. Practice reading it aloud.

8. *Lines 359–362, 374, 393–395.* Would an Elizabethan audience feel as Gratiano did? How would an audience feel today? Give reasons for your answers.

9. Should the play end with the departure of Shylock, line 395? Explain your answer.

ACT V

1. Account for the presence at Belmont of Lorenzo and Jessica. Find the lines in an earlier scene which note their arrival. How did their coming affect after events of the play?

2. Contrast this act with the previous one. How is the ability of Shakespeare as a playwright shown by this contrast?

3. To what part of Shakespeare's audience would the opening lines of this scene particularly appeal? How are the classical allusions linked with the story itself?

4. Sum up the happenings of this act which were needed to complete the falling action of the play.

5. Show that lines 142–240 are an example of dramatic irony.

6. *Lines 253–257.* Is the use of this letter telling of the safety of Antonio's ships a convincing solution of Antonio's troubles? Give reasons for your answer.

7. Is the Portia of this scene consistent with the Portia of the courtroom scene? or with the Portia of the casket scenes? In which scenes does she seem the most lifelike?

General Questions

1. Give a brief summary of each of the four plots in the play. Do you consider the love story of Portia and Bassanio the main plot? If not, what is?

2. Which characters are concerned in two or more of the plots? Are any characters concerned in all four?

3. What is the attitude of each of the main characters towards money?

4. Why is the play called a comedy? (See pages 107–108.)

5. Is it true that in this play Shakespeare cares more for dramatic effect than for verisimilitude (that is, reasonableness, or convincing likeness to real life)? Do you think that Shakespeare cares more here for dramatic effect than for moral effect? Give reasons for your answers.

6. What are possibilities of making this play into a good moving picture?

7. Discuss the title of the play. Can you suggest a more suitable one? What do you think of "The Lady of Belmont," a title used by a modern playwright who deals with the same story?

8. The following questions have appeared on the examination sheets of the College Entrance Board:[1]

> *a.* What are the chief characteristics that you would emphasize in a presentation of Shylock on the stage? Give the reasons for your answer.

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b. Describe the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice.* (Do not outline the plot, but describe the scene as if it were a tableau or a painting, emphasizing what you imagine to have been the grouping, costumes, background, etc.) (Write a composition of 150 words.)

c. At the end of the play, Shylock has presumably many years to live. Sketch his probable later history.

King Henry V

This play may be regarded as the third of a trilogy or as the central act of a five-act cycle, preceded by *Richard II* and *Henry IV* and followed by *Henry VI* and *Richard III.* By all means the student should have some knowledge of *Henry IV.* A quick and interesting way to get it would be for the teacher to review it for the class, bringing out particularly the characters of Prince Hal and Falstaff.

PROLOGUE

1. Explain the metrical form or pattern. Illustrate by some regular lines. Scan lines 2, 21, and 25.

2. Is the writer emphasizing the crudeness of his stage equipment or the greatness of his theme?

3. Quote the lines which contain a simile using dogs as a basis of comparison. What similarity is there between these lines and *Julius Cæsar*, III, i, 274?

4. Quote two lines which contain a picture of high-spirited horses.

5. How is the Chorus a bequest from the Greek drama?

ACT I

Scene I

1. Picture the costumes.

2. State clearly in your own words the provisions of the bill under discussion.

3. How are we made aware of the political condition of England and France?

4. Summarize the information given in lines 22–66, showing the change that has taken place in Henry since he became king.

5. Show how lines 90–98 make an effective close for the scene.

Scene II

1. Picture this processional entrance. What properties would be required in the scene?

2. What reason is there for war with France? What reasons against it?

3. What is the Salic law? How is it explained away in this case?

4. What were the relations of England, Scotland, and France even as late as Shakespeare's own time? Compare this passage in *The Merchant of Venice*:

> Nerissa. What think you of the Scottish lord?
>
> Portia. He borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able; I think the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another.

5. Paraphrase Canterbury's long speech about the bees (beginning with line 183). Did the Elizabethans like these "pulpit" passages? Do you?

ACT II

Prologue

1. What is the meaning of line 5?

2. Explain the picture in lines 9–10.

3. Is line 17 still a true description of England?

4. Comment on the appeal of line 26 to Elizabethan taste.

5. What information does this prologue give?

Scene I

1. How would the encounter in lines 29–40 be acted out?

2. *Line 82:* "The king has killed his heart." To what does this refer?

Scene II

1. Show the dramatic irony in King Henry's speech beginning line 20.

2. *Line 40.* Why is this man brought into the conversation?

3. *Lines 79–144.* Remember how much the Elizabethans liked declamation. Select the member of your class that you think will read this most effectively and ask him to read it aloud.

4. Does the sentence upon the three traitors indicate that the king is revengeful?

5. What is the most dramatic moment in the scene? Give the reason for your choice.

Scene III

1. Point out the mixture of humorous and pathetic details in lines 1–35. Is such a mixture good or bad art? Why?

2. What purposes are served by this scene?

Scene iv

1. How would you stage this scene to indicate the difference in setting from Act I, Scene ii?

2. *Line 35.* In what ways has the king shown himself "terrible in constant resolution"?

3. *Line 75.* What would be Exeter's manner in speech and bearing? Enter and read a few lines to show this.

4. Summarize Exeter's message to the king. Restate his message to the Dauphin, showing especially the meaning of the last three lines.

5. Why would the Elizabethan audience particularly enjoy this scene?

ACT III

Prologue

1. Describe the picture made by lines 3–17. Be sure to include all the motion, the colors, and the sounds.

2. What is childish or naïve about the close of this Prologue?

Scene i

1. How does this scene sacrifice realism or verisimilitude to dramatic effect? Do you object? Would an audience of Shakespeare's day have objected?

2. *Line 31:* "Like greyhounds in the slips." Explain. Quote another passage used earlier in this play where the figure of speech is similar to this one. A recent number of a well-known magazine has an article entitled "The New Sport of Greyhound Racing." Is it new? How is it done now in Florida, in England, at Agua Caliente, Mexico, and other places?

3. How would you make the audience realize the activity going on throughout this scene?

Scene II

1. What is gained by putting in this burlesque parallel to the main military action? Did you ever see the same device used in a circus or a vaudeville show?

2. Comment on the boy's judgment of people; on his manner of expressing himself.

3. The humor throughout this scene lies largely in the accent or dialect which does not show in the printed lines. Which would probably do this better, an Elizabethan set of actors or a modern group?

4. Would a similar dialogue of soldiers in the World War be interesting to a modern audience; for example, a Yankee, a Negro, and a Jew?

5. Do the Irishman and the Scotchman show the same characteristics as are usually assigned them on the present-day stage? Quote expressions to bear out your answer.

Scene III

1. How would this scene be arranged on the Elizabethan stage?

2. Explain the interesting simile in lines 24–27.

3. Would this scene be considered of greater worth by an Elizabethan audience or by a modern one? Why?

Scene IV

1. Some critics believe that this scene is an interpolation, but note the purposes it serves. See if you can name at least two of these purposes.

2. Show in what ways this conversation would seem genuinely funny to an Elizabethan audience. Would most of them be likely to know scraps of French? If not, in what other way might the meaning be conveyed?

3. This sounds like a burlesque imitation of a lesson from a French exercise book. Do you think Shakespeare meant to suggest that?

Scene v

1. Explain the reference in lines 13–14 to the weather and the geography of England.

2. *Lines 50–52.* Explain the simile. Is it a good one?

3. Why does Shakespeare put in all the mouth-filling French names in lines 40–45? Why does he emphasize the small numbers and the sickness and famine of the English army?

Scene vi

1. How has Fluellen been deceived by Pistol?

2. What personal peculiarity of Bardolph's is emphasized in this play, as in *2 Henry IV*?

3. *Line 111:* "*Tucket. Enter* Montjoy." Hear and see this. Describe Montjoy's costume as you imagine it to be. How does he refer to it?

4. What is the gist of his message? of Henry's reply? In what way does the interview differ from modern practice in time of war?

Scene vii

1. Show that this scene is meant as a contrast to Scene vi. Contrast particularly the Dauphin and Henry.

2. Note the word play throughout, and especially in lines 108–119.

3. Sum up from lines 134–145 the French idea of the English. On the other hand, what does this entire play show of the English idea of the French?

ACT IV

Prologue

1. Enumerate the different scenes pictured throughout the speech.

2. What sounds and signs of activity are mentioned?

Scene I

1. Explain the meaning of lines 4–5.

2. Show the dramatic irony in this scene.

3. *Lines 218–272.* This is the famous "Sham of Ceremony" speech. Give the line of thought in your own words.

4. *Lines 280 ff.* What crime is on the king's conscience?

5. Is the king too sensitive to be a really heroic figure? Compare him with Lincoln.

6. Do you know of other historic cases of prayer before battle?

Scene II

1. How is this scene meant to contrast with Scene i?

2. In what way might these scraps of French be of use to the audience?

Scene III

1. What is the line of thought in Henry's long speech beginning with line 20? The best answer is a good oral reading of the passage with the right changes of inflection and emphasis to interpret it well.

2. Explain the double meaning of lines 112–113.

Scene IV

In what ways would this scene especially please an Elizabethan audience?

Scene v

Note that this is another step in the alternation of contrasting scenes upon which almost the whole play is built.

Scene vi

Renaissance literature is full of examples of loyal devotion of man to man such as this of York for Suffolk. What other example have we already seen in *The Merchant of Venice*? Compare the two.

Scene vii

1. What two evidences are cited here that the king is "terrible in constant resolution"? Where has this been shown before? Would this be an admirable quality in the Middle Ages? Is it now?

2. Show how the effect is softened by Fluellen's admiration and the incident of the glove.

Scene viii

1. Discuss the effectiveness of the mixture of nonsense and seriousness.

2. What is absurd about the herald's report of the French and the English losses? Is this patriotic enthusiasm overdone? Was there any such national conceit during the late World War?

ACT V

Prologue

This prologue contains what is said to be the one allusion in Shakespeare's plays to contemporary politics. Find and explain it.

Scene I

1. Describe the way the players should act this scene to make it really humorous.

2. Show how Pistol's words and actions are consistent with his character.

3. Why does he speak in verse though the others use prose?

Scene II

1. See the gorgeous processional entrance. Describe it.

2. *Lines 23–67.* Paraphrase this speech to bring out in some detail the line of thought.

3. What qualities does the king show in his wooing?

4. Imagine this scene on the stage. Show how it should be acted to be really funny and yet have enough dignity to prevent its being ridiculous.

General Questions

1. Discuss the following as true or false statements:

a. This play is not really a drama but an epic.

b. The character of Henry V "may almost be said to consist of piety, honesty, and modesty."—Hudson.

c. "Henry V is a National Anthem in five acts."—Brandes.

d. "Henry has a stolid, well-balanced mind, but no sense of humor."—Stephenson.

e. Next to Henry, Fluellen is the most vital character in the play.

2. How can you account for the immense popularity of historical plays during the reign of Elizabeth?

3. Can you see in King Henry any traces of the rollicking

Prince Hal, fond of low company and practical jokes? How do you account for the change in his habits?

4. Discuss King Henry (1) as a king; (2) as a soldier; (3) as a lover; (4) as a "good mixer."

5. Make an interesting narrative, oral or written, of one of the following subjects:

a. Henry and the traitors.

b. Falstaff's death, going back into *1 Henry IV* for the beginning of the story ("the king has killed his heart").

c. The incident of the king's glove.

d. The incident of the leek.

6. Show that Shakespeare has tried to portray the life and activity of the whole army and not just of the leaders.

7. What reasons can you give to explain why the great actor David Garrick chose to play the part of Chorus in this play, not that of Henry?

8. Select from the play three or four passages of eloquence and lyric beauty and prepare to read them well to the class.

9. Memorize at least one such passage.

10. The following questions on this play have been asked in recent examinations of the College Entrance Board:[1]

a. The plot of *King Henry the Fifth* (at least two paragraphs).

b. In which scenes of *Henry V* do you think the king reveals the best traits of his character? (Give a specific answer; that is, name the traits and show how they are brought out.) (150 words.)

c. Elements of popularity in the character of Henry V. (150 words or more.)

d. The battle of Agincourt. (150 words or more.)

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Macbeth

General questions to be noted before and during the first reading of the play. Consult the *New Hudson Shakespeare* or any other well-annotated edition.

1. What is the probable date of composition?

2. What is the principal source from which the historical facts are taken? Are the facts altered?

3. *a*. What is the regular verse form throughout the play? Select for illustration three regular lines and mark the metrical feet.

b. What other verse forms are used? Give illustrations.

c. Where do you find rhyme in the play? Why?

d. Where do you find prose? Why?

e. Find some examples of end-stopped lines.

f. Find a passage illustrating the free-moving, run-on effect. See pages 120–121.

ACT I

Scene I

1. What is the poetic form of this scene; that is, the metre and rhyme?

2. Explain the old superstition about witches' 'familiars.'

3. Show that this is a keynote scene.

4. Would you have it on the outer or inner stage? Why?

Scene II

1. Picture the entrance. Are the costumes those of Scotch Highlanders?

2. What is the form of the verse?

3. Show that this is an expository scene. What does it tell the reader about the circumstances?

Scene III

1. What other details of the witch superstitions are made use of here?

2. Do not miss the effect upon eye and ear in lines 30–37. Explain how you would have them acted.

3. What does this scene accomplish in advancing the action?

4. What does it accomplish in the portrayal of characters?

Scene IV

1. "There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face."

What does this statement mean? Whether it is true or false is a question still being discussed in magazine articles. Its truth is denied by certain phrenologists and self-styled 'psychologists.' What do you think about it?

2. Explain lines 11–15 as a splendid example of dramatic irony.

Scene V

1. What is Lady Macbeth's opinion of her husband's character, as shown by the soliloquy at the beginning of this scene?

2. Show the underlying meaning in line 36 and in other significant lines in the scene. How would such subtleties be conveyed to the audience?

Scene VI

1. Hear the music; see the torches, the costuming, and the impressive processional entrance. Describe them all.

2. Show how the first ten lines perform the function of scenery, picturing—what?

3. Note the dramatic art in the speech and the situation at the end of the scene.

Scene vii

1. In the opening speech Macbeth finds five arguments against the murder of Duncan. Express in your own words the thought of this speech, making the five arguments clear.

2. Compare this first speech with the last two speeches of Macbeth in the same scene. What change has taken place?

3. Show that by the end of Act I these characters are already clearly differentiated: Duncan, Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, Banquo. Which, so far, has displayed the most kingly qualities?

ACT II

Scene i

1. Show that the opening lines again provide the setting.

2. Picture the action or stage 'business' through Banquo's speech beginning in line 4.

3. This play was written to be performed in the afternoon in the Globe Theatre, which was open to the sky; why, then, the torches?

4. Is the dagger visible to the audience? Give a reason for your answer.

5. Discuss the closing lines as an uncommonly effective exit. How should they be spoken, shouted loudly or whispered?

Scene ii

1. To whom does the pronoun 'them' in line 1 refer? Judging by the whole speech, what evidently has been done by Lady Macbeth?

2. Contrast the attitude of Macbeth and his wife in this scene.

Scene III

1. Be sure to *see* the porter; is he old or young? fat or lean? How does he walk? What gesture accompanies the last words of his speech?

2. Explain the dramatic irony in lines 69–72.

3. Do you think Lady Macbeth's swoon was real or pretended? How could the difference be made clear on the stage?

4. Which lines near the close of the scene show that suspicion is already falling on Macbeth?

Scene IV

Show that this scene has a plot, an atmosphere, and a forecast value.

ACT III

Scene I

1. Following line 10 comes another processional entrance. How would you make it different from earlier ones?

2. What three significant questions does Macbeth manage to conceal in his apparently casual remarks to Banquo?

3. The couplet at the close of the scene is noticeably like what other closing couplet earlier in the play?

Scene II

1. Note the poetic beauty of lines 22–23; commit them to memory.

2. What change has come about in the relations of the husband and wife? What change in the attitude of each toward the murders?

3. Explain line 55.

Scene III

1. Point out the ways in which the lines supply the setting for this entire scene. Show the good stagecraft in lines 11–14. What makes this scene very effective on the stage?

2. For what reasons may this scene be considered the climax of the play?

Scene IV

1. Describe the stage picture in the opening lines. Where is Macbeth? Why?

2. Paraphrase Lady Macbeth's remarks in lines 32–37. Comment on the truth of them.

3. Picture Macbeth's action and expression before Lennox's question in line 48; in lines 87–90; in lines 93–96.

4. Is the ghost of Banquo visible to the audience?

5. Compare line 119 with the first line of this scene.

6. Compare lines 126–127 with Act III, Scene i, line 41, and note the difference between actual time and dramatic time.

7. *Line 141.* Note the emphasis upon 'sleep' in the play. Quote several other passages concerning it.

8. When they are alone, does Lady Macbeth upbraid her husband for his behavior? How does her bearing throughout the scene affect your judgment of her character?

Scene V

Perhaps this is an interpolation by some other author. Do you think so? Note form, style, and characters.

Scene VI

1. Show the value of this as a transition or coupling scene, looking backward and forward.

2. What is the tone of Lennox's first speech, lines 1–24?

ACT IV

Scene I

1. Note the remarkable artistic value and suggestiveness of the word 'slope' in line 57.

2. Note the dramatic effectiveness of the apparitions; how were they probably presented on the Elizabethan stage? How are they on the modern stage?

3. Get from the notes the names of the eight kings, the significance of the glass, and the meaning of line 121.

4. In this scene and others do you think that Shakespeare deliberately tried to please King James? How?

Scene II

1. This is one of the most effective scenes in the play because it is one of the most human. What is Lady Macduff's mood: angry and resentful or nervous, agitated, and worried? Does she believe all the hard things she says of Macduff? If not, why does she say them?

2. How would the very *voice* of the child add to the pathos of the scene? Is he bright, attractive, and used to chatting with his mother? brave and chivalrous by instinct or training or both? from six to eight years old, should you say?

3. Show the value of the scene (1) for variety of emotional effect upon the audience; (2) for emphasizing the change in Macbeth's character.

4. In what ways does the playwright make this scene more harrowing than the murder of Duncan or Banquo? Why?

Scene III

1. What purpose is served and what conclusion reached by the dialogue, lines 1–139?

2. What reason could Shakespeare have for introducing the apparently irrelevant material of lines 139–159?

3. How are pathos and suspense secured in this scene?

ACT V

Scene I

1. Describe the stage picture; would any properties be needed?

2. Note how Shakespeare individualizes even minor characters like the doctor; what is he like in appearance and disposition?

3. What varied feelings would an audience experience during this scene?

Scene II

1. Describe the stage picture indicated by the first stage direction.

2. Who are these soldiers and where are they going?

3. What is the purpose of the scene?

Scene III

1. What is the meaning and connection of the first line?

2. How does the scene show the deterioration of Macbeth's character? What is his mood?

3. What passage of fine poetry can you find in this scene?

4. What is the dramatic purpose of this dialogue with the doctor?

5. What stage business goes on from line 32 to the end of the scene?

Scene iv

Quote the two lines of the apparition's prophecy which are now coming true.

Scene v

1. How is Lady Macbeth's death made dramatic? Did she commit suicide? See lines 73–74 in Act V, Scene i.

2. Does Macbeth's reception of the news show lack of affection for his wife? Or is his feeling that life or death matters little now to either of them? See lines 22–28, Act V, Scene iii. Does anything about his speech indicate deep feeling?

Scenes vi and vii

1. What is the effect of short scenes such as these and Scene iv above?

2. Do not miss the noise throughout these scenes; as in Scene vi, line 9, and Scene vii, line 21. Point out other places.

Scene viii

1. *Line 1.* Explain the expression "play the Roman fool."

2. Do you think the play should end with line 34? What reasons for and against? Why did Elizabethan plays have a diminuendo rather than a climax or climax-tableau ending? See page 112.

3. Does Shakespeare succeed in keeping the sympathy of the audience with the two criminals up to the last moment of their lives? Is that a merit or a defect in the play?

4. Now that you have finished reading this play, do you know what Aristotle meant when he said that the function of tragic drama is to "cleanse the soul by pity and terror"?

General Questions

Note. For the resurvey of the play,—for the notebooks, for oral discussion, or for special assignment to individual members of the class.

1. Write a title and a brief summary sentence for each act.

2. Look through the play from beginning to end; does it move rapidly or slowly? Which would be the swiftest act? Which the slowest?

3. Select from each act the scene that in your opinion would make the most effective stage scene. Give reasons for your choice.

4. Find all the humor there is in the play and comment on its effect.

5. Dramatic *sounds* in Macbeth. There are twenty or more different places in which sounds are used for dramatic effect. See if you can find them all; discuss their use.

6. How has the character of Macbeth changed as a result of his deeds? Discuss this in detail, quoting illustrative passages from the text.

7. Study the metaphors in Macbeth's speeches. List them in your notebook and be able to explain the significance of each.

8. Discuss the following as true or false statements:

a. This play has "no nice discriminations of character" (Dr. Samuel Johnson).

b. Macbeth is not morally responsible; he has no freedom of choice; his destiny is ruled and determined by supernatural evil powers. (Note how the character of Banquo is used to clarify this point.)

c. Lady Macbeth is "naturally cruel and savage" (Cumberland); "a female fury" (Goethe); "a piece of august atrocity" (Campbell).

d. Lady Macbeth was "a loving wife" (Tieck); "no Amazon nor virago but a lady beautiful and delicate, instinct with nerve force, probably small, for it is the smaller sort of women whose emotional fire is most fierce" (Bucknill); "fair, feminine, perhaps even fragile, intrepid daring in her dark blue eyes" (Mrs. Siddons).

e. Lady Macbeth was more guilty than her husband.

f. The play is morally unsound because the sympathy of the audience is with the criminals throughout.

g. The play is morally sound because it leaves the minds of the spectators confirmed and strengthened toward good and fearful and antagonistic toward evil.

9. Following are some of the questions on *Macbeth* asked in College Entrance Board and West Point examinations in recent years:

a. A succession of events is referred to in the following quotations. Tell what the events are.

"So well thy words become thee as thy wounds."

"If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly."

"That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold."

"We have scotched the snake, not killed it."

"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes."

"This push
Will cheer me ever or disseat me now."[1]

b. Trace Banquo's connection with the story of Macbeth.[1]

c. How does Macbeth suffer for his crime otherwise than by meeting death at the hands of Macduff?

d. Write a composition of at least three hundred words on the supernatural elements in Macbeth.

[1] From examination questions copyrighted by the College Entrance Examination Board. Used by permission.

Suggestions for Reports on Home Reading

Note. Such questions as the following may be used by the student to direct his attention and assist his understanding and also to make a report to the class or teacher. The teacher may select different questions from the list for a particular class or student or a particular play. For example, Nos. 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 18, 24, 28, 29, and 36 might best be used for a report on *Romeo and Juliet*.

Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 18, 28, 30, 33, 34, and 35 are particularly applicable to *As You Like It*.

Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 20, 21, 29, 35, and 37 for *Hamlet*.

Nos. 1, 5, 12, 14, 18, 28, 30, 31, 33, and 36 for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Nos. 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 17, 20, 22, and 37 for *Julius Cæsar*. Or any other combinations could be made according to the judgment of teacher or student.

1. What kind of play is this: tragedy, comedy, history, or a combination? Explain your answer. See pages 106–108.

2. What is the theme or central idea of the whole play: patriotism, ambition, revenge, love, or what? What opposing forces make the conflict?

3. Is there more than one plot? If so, which is the main plot, and what subplots are there? Have the subplots any artistic relation to the main plot; that is, do they emphasize the theme, or are they planned for contrast, atmosphere, variety, suspense, or other dramatic value? Explain and illustrate your statements.

4. (1) Write a summary sentence for each act showing the progress of the main plot. (2) Write a similar summary sentence showing the progress, if there is any, in each act of each subplot.

5. Arrange the dramatis personæ in significant groups, with comments on each group.

6. Which characters embody or represent opposing forces?

7. Select one character to discuss at some length. How

should he dress and act in different scenes, what characteristics has he, what effect upon the audience? Take, for example, Launcelot in *The Merchant of Venice*, Fluellen in *Henry V*, Polonius in *Hamlet*.

8. Write a paragraph or two on the women in the play.

9. Which characters are the most real, alive, vital?

10. Comment on the dramatic value or significance of the minor characters. Are they made interesting and individual? How?

11. Where do the events of the story occur? Does this setting have any important influence on the incidents or the characterization?

12. What stage pictures do you recall most vividly?

13. Which do you think is the best acting scene in the play? Why?

14. Discuss the music in the play. What music is there? What dramatic value has it? What instruments would be required?

15. Discuss other dramatic sounds or noises in the play.

16. Make a study of the entrances and exits in one play.

17. Make a study of the adaptations in the play to the requirements of the Elizabethan stage.

18. Find examples of dramatic irony.

19. Does the play as a whole move rapidly or slowly? Which is the swiftest act? Which the slowest?

20. Which scene has the highest emotional tension? Which the most exciting action?

21. Which is the most humorous? Which the most pathetic?

22. Discuss the dramatic art shown in the use of certain scenes or passages for contrast, relief, lapse of time, suspense, character portrayal, playing to the tastes of the audience.

23. Are there parts (especially in comedies) where reasonableness or verisimilitude is sacrificed to dramatic effect?

24. In a tragedy or history discuss the comic elements.

25. In a comedy discuss the tragic or near-tragic elements.

26. Are there details in which justice or moral propriety are sacrificed to dramatic art? In this case can you show that the play is, nevertheless, essentially wholesome in moral effect? What moral ideas are impressed or strengthened by the play?

27. Discuss the poetic form of the play. Is there much rhyme and prose? Is there much irregularity and variety? Give illustrations.

28. Find lines in which the setting is given by poetic description.

29. Find eloquent passages, combining emotional force or intellectual keenness with beautiful diction.

30. Cite passages of lyric beauty.

31. Cite lines or scenes remarkable for poetic imagination.

32. Find evidences of Shakespeare's great variety of general information.

33. Find interesting allusions to nature: birds, flowers, trees, animals, etc.

34. Which scene contains the best dialogue? Give the reasons for your answer.

35. Find lines that make good quotations because they express vividly and concisely some interesting general idea or bit of truth.

36. Choose one scene to discuss for (1) its stagecraft and dramatic values; (2) its poetry and diction; (3) its psychological or emotional effect.

37. What have you learned about human nature through reading this play?

[IX]

Dramatic Analysis of Fifteen Plays

"Know, these plays have had their trial already and stood out all appeals."—Preface to the First Folio

Every student should be given the opportunity for the class study of at least four of Shakespeare's plays and the home reading, more or less guided, of at least four more. Many progressive high schools, most junior colleges, and of course all colleges offer half-year or year courses in Shakespeare. It is not too much to hope that the future will see a college production of Shakespeare's plays given by students whose power of dramatic interpretation warrants their appearance on the stage.

In all such courses the following analyses will be found valuable (1) to use for reference in the study of the other chapters in this book, particularly Chapter VI; (2) to give the student a slight acquaintance with the plots and characters of several plays which he otherwise might never know; (3) to help classes, clubs, and other groups to decide which plays to take up for intensive study; (4) to help the student to decide which plays to select for his own reading in addition to those discussed in class; (5) to impress upon the student Shakespeare's mastery of the laws that govern drama as a craft as well as the principles that underlie it as an art.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Analysis by Act and Scene[1]

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (of the Nature of a Prologue)

Act I, Scene i. Theseus, about to celebrate his marriage to Hippolyta, gives orders to Philostrate to have dramatic festivities for the event. Egeus and the Athenian lovers are introduced, and their story is unfolded. Helena is in love with Demetrius, who loves Hermia; Hermia loves Lysander, who loves her, but her father, Egeus, wishes her to marry Demetrius, who has already made love to her friend, Helena. With the determination of Hermia and Lysander to fly from Athens, and of Helena to warn Demetrius of the flight and lure him to accompany her to the wood, the complication is fully foreshadowed.

Act I, Scene ii. Bottom and the crew of patches are introduced. They are preparing a play, an interlude, to be given "before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night." So this sub-action is linked on the orders given to Philostrate by Theseus, I, i, 11–19.

Act II, Scene i, 1–184. The fairies are introduced, and the quarrel between Oberon and Titania over the 'little changeling boy' is described. Oberon orders Puck to bring him the flower called love-in-idleness and its magic liquor he will lay on Titania's sleeping eyelids.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth

Act II, Scene i, 185–265. The story of the lovers is connected with that of the fairies. Oberon overhears Demetrius

[1] "It must be understood that a play can be analyzed into very different schemes of plot. It must not be thought that one of these schemes is right and the rest wrong; but the schemes will be better

scorning the fond Helena; and, sympathizing with her, he instructs Puck to anoint the eyes of the disdainful youth with the love-juice.

Act II, Scene ii. Oberon finds Titania asleep and squeezes the flower on her eyelids. Puck finds Hermia and Lysander asleep from weariness, and thinking Lysander to be Demetrius anoints his eyes. Demetrius and Helena then enter, and Lysander awaking falls madly in love with Helena.

Act III, Scene i. The rehearsal of the interlude by the crew of patches. Bottom's 'translation.' Titania awakening sees him, crowned as he is with the ass's head, and dotes on him in her extremity.

Act III, Scene ii, 1–121. The complication is at its height when the eyes of Demetrius are anointed and Helena is brought before him as he wakes.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point[1]

Act III, Scene ii, 122–447. The quarreling of the lovers, whose original relations to one another are now so completely reversed, the challenges of the men and the recriminations of the women, make an effective climax. Worn out and spellbound all fall asleep.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence

Act III, Scene ii, 448–463. The beginning of the resolution is usually in the closest union with the climax, and the application of the juice to Lysander's eyes anticipates the end of the troubles of the lovers.

or worse in proportion as—while of course representing correctly the facts of the play—they bring out more or less of what ministers to our sense of design."—Moulton.

[1] Many interpreters and students of dramatic technique find the turning point in Puck's spell, uttered as he squeezes the juice on Lysander's eye, III, ii, 448–463.

Act IV, Scene i. Oberon, having obtained Titania's page, awakes her from her infatuation for Bottom, and the fairy king and queen are reconciled. The human lovers are also readjusted and reconciled. Oberon orders Puck to remove the ass's head from Bottom, who, awaking from what he calls a "most rare vision," utters the significant words, "Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream."

Act IV, Scene ii. "Sweet bully Bottom" is restored to his fellows, and the patches make final arrangements for the performance of the interlude at the marriage festival.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (of the Nature of an Epilogue)

Act V, Scene i. Theseus and Hippolyta reappear, and "the lovers, full of joy and mirth," come in. The artisans perform the interlude before the court. After "the iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve," the fairies come and invoke blessings on the bridal-bed.

King Henry the Fourth, Part I

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The political setting of the play is given in the first speech of the king; he tells of the bloody strifes in both foreign and civil affairs that have filled the first year of his reign. Percy's valor in battle is reported, and from the king we hear of the brilliant reputation of this young man in contrast to the boisterous and seemingly worthless life of his own son, Prince Henry.

Act I, Scene ii. Prince Henry, with Falstaff and other boon companions, is introduced. The change in diction from the verse of the preceding scene to prose here is significant of the

change of the stage-setting from the palace to the tavern. A robbery is planned, but Prince Henry does not consent to join in it till he is assured of the fun that is involved in the scheme that Poins has proposed.

Act I, Scene iii, 1–124. The king openly reveals his suspicious attitude toward the men who helped him to the throne. Through his imperiousness he arouses antagonism in Worcester and Hotspur. This foreshadows the first step in the falling action of the drama.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iii, 124–302. Hotspur's personal honor has been offended by the king's refusal to ransom his wife's brother, whom he fears as the rightful heir to the throne. Honor in its varying degrees is a prominent theme throughout the play. Percy urges his father and uncle to "redeem Your banish'd honours and restore yourselves Into the good thoughts of the world again" (lines 180–182). He would "pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon, Or dive into the bottom of the deep, . . . And pluck up drowned honour by the locks" (lines 202–205) provided that he "might wear Without corrival all her dignities" (lines 206–207).

Worcester proposes a scheme of uniting with the Scots and York against the king. Hotspur pronounces it a noble plot and consents to engage in it, but this willingness to join with the enemies of his country and to sacrifice patriotic loyalty to personal honor marks the beginning of the complication. The deceitful Worcester with whom he now makes alliance appears as an important factor in bringing about the dramatic catastrophe.

Act II, Scene i. This scene with its realistic presentation of an Elizabethan inn yard prepares for the Gadshill robbery.

Act II, Scene ii. The highwaymen are at work. In accordance with their plan Prince Henry and Poins desert Falstaff

and his three men when the travelers approach but return in disguise and take the booty from the thieves.

Act II, Scene iii. Hotspur with characteristic disdain for outward display of tender feeling takes a cold farewell of Lady Kate and starts off to meet his allies in the cause against the king.

Act II, Scene iv. In this, which has been called the most mirthful scene in the whole sweep of dramatic literature, Falstaff reveals his resourcefulness. Here we see the prince in the height of his merrymaking among characters of all types, ranging from the nimble-witted giant of humor to the blank Francis, whose only language is, "Anon, anon."

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene i. Hotspur, Mortimer, and Glendower have united and decide on the division of the country between them. The contrast between the nature of Hotspur and that of Glendower is made clear. After taking leave of their wives, Mortimer and Hotspur start off to prepare for war.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene ii. So far Prince Henry has been shown in the gay life that gave occasion for his unenviable reputation. From now on is revealed his true self, ever great and honorable at the core even while he is indulging in the fun at Eastcheap.

In this important scene Shakespeare reminds us of the central forces that determined the character and actions of King Richard the Second and of King Henry the Fourth and gives us the secret of Prince Henry's fitness to rule. Richard the Second was a sentimentalist, who had no stability to his life. He mingled with the common people but for the indulgence of his

own selfish feelings; he let his worthless flatterers interfere with his reign until they were indirectly the cause of his downfall. King Henry was the opposite in his make-up—a man of action who could set a goal and reach it. Out of policy he kept aloof from the people; but although shrewdness and diplomacy may make a politician, they never make a great leader of men. In a true ruler there is need of something vital and sincere. Shakespeare shows Prince Henry mingling with all classes of people, not for self-indulgence, but to satisfy his hunger for that which is genuine and real in life. He flees from the polished court where all is artificial and unreal to the Eastcheap tavern, where the vice is at least frank and genuine. He is more concerned with life itself than with the trappings of it.

Act III, Scene iii. A vivid picture of the life at Eastcheap under its monarch, Falstaff. The money that had been stolen in a previous prank is repaid by the prince. He cares nothing for the superficial taint to his royal name in having had a share in the robbery, for it was the price of "a good jest for ever" (II, ii, 94). The scene closes with the breaking up of the party to make preparations for war. "Prince Henry passes to and fro between the history and the comedy, serving as the bond which unites the two."—Dowden.

Act IV, Scene i. Northumberland intimates that he is ill and cannot aid his son in the fight. From now on Hotspur's chances for success are constantly decreased. He receives news that the opposing forces, thirty thousand strong, are approaching and again that Glendower cannot come for fourteen days. Glorying in the greater danger, Hotspur rouses his men to die merrily.

Act IV, Scene ii. In humorous contrast to the true valor of the last scene is this picture of Falstaff with his band of scarecrows being urged on to Shrewsbury by Prince Henry and Westmoreland.

Act IV, Scene iii. Hotspur is impatient for the battle, while Worcester and Vernon try to persuade him to wait until morn-

ing. The dispute is interrupted by the entrance of Blunt bearing a message from the king. Hotspur explains his cause but withholds his answer till morning.

Act IV, Scene iv. The dramatic dénouement or catastrophe is foreshadowed in York's fears for Hotspur.

Act V, Scene i. Worcester and Vernon are sent by Percy to the king. Prince Henry magnanimously expresses his admiration for Hotspur and, to save blood on either side, challenges him to decide the matter in single fight. Here we have the fine distinction between his conception of honor and that which ruled Hotspur. Throughout the play Hotspur has sacrificed the country's good to personal honor. At the crisis Prince Henry shows that a larger spirit and a nobler principle rule his life—to save the blood of his countrymen he is willing to enter in single contest against this "king of honor." King Henry's policy intervenes, and terms of reconciliation are offered. At the close of the scene is revealed the secret of Falstaff's attitude toward life.

Act V, Scene ii. Worcester and Vernon bring back a false report of the terms offered to Hotspur by the king and so sacrifice the common good to their own selfish interests. This is significant in the justification of the laws of the drama. The nemesis is brought about by the application of the same principle that Hotspur had used to attain his end. "As you mete it out, so shall it be meted out unto you." Too late does Hotspur wish that the quarrel might rest on his head and Harry Monmouth's alone. Dauntless to the end he leads his men unto the field to the cry "Esperance! Percy!" against his country.

Act V, Scene iii. The battle is on. That the king is not made of the finest stuff is apparent from the fact that he sends likenesses of himself into the field. Hotspur and Douglas show their wonted valor, while Falstaff stands idly by in shelter, for to him honor is nothing but air.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iv. King Henry and Douglas fight. The king is in danger; Prince Henry enters and fights with Douglas, who in a moment flies. The king has evidence of his son's love. Hotspur and Prince Henry fight, and Hotspur is killed. Douglas and Falstaff fight, and Falstaff pretends to be killed. This seeming cowardice is relieved by the humor of the situation when Falstaff, left for dead by Prince Henry, rises, and, fearing that Hotspur—the "king of honor"—might also be feigning death, stabs the body. A final assurance of Prince Henry's magnanimous conception of honor is shown when he suffers Falstaff to seem the slayer of Hotspur. To him the deed was sufficient; he did not need the praise.

Act V, Scene v. Vernon and Worcester are put to death. Prince Henry secures the ransom of Douglas, whom he respects for his valor. The scene ends in a forward march to meet the other conspiring foes of the king.

King Henry the Fourth, Part II

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Induction. Many-tongued Rumour sends throughout the land lying messages about the issue of the "bloody field by Shrewsbury" (line 24).

Act I, Scene i. Bardolph and Travers on the authority of Rumour bring to Northumberland false reports of the battle. Morton comes from the field with the true account and tells of the death of Hotspur at the hands of Harry Monmouth, and of the approach of the king's forces under Lancaster and Westmoreland. Northumberland throws off his pretense of illness and determines to meet the foe. His hope for victory is

strengthened by his alliance with York, who "turns insurrection to religion" (line 201) and who "doth enlarge his rising with the blood Of fair King Richard, scrap'd from Pomfret stones" (lines 204–205), and thus arouses in his followers a belief that his cause is holy and just.

Act I, Scene ii. The comic element emerges under its great leader, Falstaff. From the fact that he is to serve under Lancaster against the rebels, the scene is connected with the historical events that in this play are compressed and rearranged into a dramatic plot.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iii. An estimate of the relative strengths of the opposing forces. The Archbishop, Mowbray, and Hastings go to gather their armies and march. With this movement the dramatic complication begins.

Act II, Scene i. Falstaff is arrested and appears before the Chief Justice on a charge brought against him by the Hostess. By an artful shift on the part of Falstaff, the quarrel is closed with a promise to sup with the Hostess and to "pay . . . all together" (lines 156–157).

Act II, Scene ii. Prince Henry returns from battle. His heart is sad on account of his father's sickness, but with keen appreciation of what the world would say if he should make any show of sorrow, he conceals his true feeling under a gay manner. This is characteristic of the irony to be found throughout Shakespeare's treatment of the character of the Prince. At the close of the scene Bardolph and a Page bring a letter from Falstaff. Prince Henry plans to come upon his old companion unawares.

Act II, Scene iii. Hotspur's glory-loving nature receives its final tribute of praise in the words of Lady Percy, who in her true grief shows that there must have been something kindlier in Hotspur's nature than was revealed in *King Henry the*

Fourth, Part I. Northumberland yields to her entreaties and readily accepts her advice to flee to Scotland.

Act II, Scene iv. The worst and the best in Falstaff's make-up are revealed. The close of the scene marks Prince Henry's farewell to boisterous merrymaking. On being told by Peto of his father's situation, he reproaches himself for carelessness and neglect of duty. He takes leave of the roisterers in the Boar's-Head Tavern with the words: "Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night" (line 337). Thus is foreshadowed his conduct in the dénouement of the play when he openly renounces Falstaff and his associates.

Act III, Scene i. The scene opens with King Henry's famous apostrophe to sleep. The strong connection between the events in this play and those in *King Richard the Second* is shown in his bitter realization that these wars and adversities are the fulfillment of prophecies made at the time of his accession to the throne. Warwick's announcement that Glendower is dead determines him, aged with care, to carry out his dream of leading a crusade to the Holy Land.

Act III, Scene ii. One of the great humorous scenes in Shakespeare. Shallow and Silence and other characters of comedy are introduced, and in their conversations, which grotesquely mix the things of the passing hour and the things of eternity, death and the price of bullocks at Stamford fair, is the very essence of Shakespearian humor. It has its roots in the perpetual paradox of human existence—the deep inherent contrast between what we are and what we aim to be. At bottom, it lies in perception of the incongruity between the actual and the ideal in man and life.

Act IV, Scene i. The Archbishop of York with his forces is ready for the conflict. News of Northumberland's flight to Scotland is reported. Conditions of peace are sent by Westmoreland to Prince John of Lancaster, who sends back word that he is awaiting the Archbishop "just distance 'tween our armies" (line 226).

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act IV, Scene ii. Lancaster meets York, Mowbray, and Hastings. He promises redress of grief; tells them to disband their army and makes a show of sending like orders to his own men. On a further pretense of wishing to see the rival forces, he sends Hastings with orders to have all pass before him. On Hastings's return with the news that their army is dispersed, Lancaster orders the three leaders to be seized and put to death for treason. In Lancaster policy is carried into treachery.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (Untying of the Knot)

Act IV, Scene iii. Falstaff makes a prisoner of Colevile, who with York and the other leaders of the rebels is sentenced to death by Lancaster.

Act IV, Scene iv. King Henry, now tottering on the brink of the grave, reiterates his intention to go to the Holy Land. At last there is peace at home—the uprising under York has been put down, and Northumberland with a great power of English and Scots has been overthrown. All his enemies are removed, and the time seems at hand for making his peace with God. But the catastrophe in the drama of his life is at hand. He has no longer the strength to undertake any journey. On receiving the good news of the success of his affairs he swoons.

Act IV, Scene v. Prince Henry enters the room where his father is lying apparently dead. As he looks at the crown on the pillow, he sees in it a bequeathal of royal care. He places it on his head and leaves the room. His father wakes and as usual misjudges the motives of his son. When the Prince tells his true thoughts with the convincing power of sincerity, there is a reconciliation between father and son. The secret of all the evils consequent on King Henry's seizure of the

throne is expressed in the words, "How I came by the crown, O God forgive" (line 219).

Act V, Scene i. Another study in humorous relief.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene ii. The death of the careworn old king is announced. The younger princes and the Chief Justice voice public sentiment concerning the forward look with the wayward Harry on the throne. The new king is not ignorant of these misgivings and gives assurance that he will be a worthy ruler. He is now determined (lines 126–129)

> To mock the expectation of the world,
> To frustrate prophecies and to raze out
> Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down
> After my seeming.

Act V, Scene iii. The news of Henry V's accession to the throne reaches Falstaff, who, accompanied by Pistol and Shallow, starts off in boisterous expectation to greet the new king and to have a share in ruling England.

Act V, Scene iv. A noisy, brawling scene which brings out in sharp contrast the condition and state of mind of the convivial crew with whom the new king used to associate and his own now regal majesty.

Act V, Scene v. The king sternly severs all connection with the wild companions of his youth. In his determination to leave no room for misgivings as to the dignity of his reign, Falstaff and all his companions are banished from his presence under penalty of death. Yet they shall be provided for, and hope of better fortune according to merit is held out. The scene closes with a promise of a glorious and happy state of affairs in the new reign.

Epilogue. A continuation of "the story, with Sir John in it," is promised. See note, lines 25–26.

King Henry the Fifth

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Prologue. The keynote of the play is struck in the reference to 'warlike Harry' (line 5) and the inadequacy of the dramatist's stage resources to represent so heroic a king.

Act I, Scene i. A dialogue between the heads of the church unfolds a general view of the political condition of England and France. The responsibility for war is shown to lie with the king's spiritual advisers. It is clear that the king has outgrown the 'hydra-headed wilfulness' of his younger days and has ripened into a man with an intense consciousness of all that is involved in kingship.

Act I, Scene ii, 1–233. The seriousness and political sagacity of Henry are revealed in his discussion with the church authorities. He will act only when satisfied that his cause is right. Convinced that great public issues are at stake, he resolves to conquer France or die in the attempt. In this high heroic temper he calls in the French ambassadors.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene ii, 234–310. With the entry of the French ambassadors the long complication, or rising action, of the play begins. The message from the Dauphin and the present of the tennis-balls show that the English king is still regarded in France as a madcap prince not to be taken seriously. Henry's reply shows his sense of dignity and his power of decisive action.

Act II, Prologue. Chorus, after describing the English preparations for war and the alarm of the French, gives warning of a conspiracy against the life of Henry.

Act II, Scene i. This scene of broad comedy introduces Nym, Pistol, and Bardolph. The humorous dialogue acts as a dramatic relief after the tension of the preceding scenes and gives a touch of realism to the action.

Act II, Scene ii. Heroism is seen against a background of treason. The conspirators are led on, step by step, to condemn themselves. In lines 12–78 is an excellent example of 'dramatic irony.' "The audience know (lines 6–7) that the conspiracy has been revealed to Henry, while the conspirators imagine that it is still a secret."—Verity.

Act II, Scene iii. As Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol make ready for the wars, the hostess tells of the death of Falstaff, the king's former boon companion. Here the broad comedy of the play is shot through with exquisite tenderness and connected vitally with the heroic dignity of the main action.

Act II, Scene iv. As the French king and his court discuss an English invasion, and the Dauphin sneers at Henry as "a vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth," Exeter, as ambassador from England, enters and demands the surrender of the crown of France on pain of war.

Act III, Prologue. Chorus appeals to the audience to see with the eye of imagination Henry's passage to Harfleur and the opening of the siege.

Act III, Scene i. Henry makes a spirited appeal to the patriotism of his soldiers.

Act III, Scene ii. The comic interest is widened by the inclusion of a Welshman, an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scot. National humors and oddities of dialect give dramatic relief and supply realistic life to the representation.

Act III, Scene iii. The governor yields Harfleur, but the approach of winter and disease among his troops determine Henry to march his forces to Calais.

Act III, Scene iv. The French princess takes a lesson in English. The scene gives humorous relief of an unusual kind and prepares for the reëntry of Katharine in the dénouement.

Act III, Scene v. The French authorities learn of the enfeebled and famished condition to which the English army is reduced, and in a spirit of self-confidence and overweening contempt they determine to send Montjoy, the chief herald, with a message of defiance to Henry.[1]

Act III, Scene vi. The scene opens with a humorous dialogue between Gower, Fluellen, and Pistol. Henry refuses to pardon Bardolph, convicted of robbing a church, and immediately on the announcement by the king of his stand on the enforcement of discipline, the French herald appears and delivers his message of defiance.

Act III, Scene vii. This scene in the French camp, with the idle boasting of the leaders emphasized, is in sharp dramatic contrast to that which precedes and that which follows.

Act IV, Prologue. Chorus describes the rival armies encamped a short distance apart on the night before the battle of Agincourt.

Act IV, Scene i. Henry's superb courage rises to its height when his fortunes seem at the lowest ebb. He moves about heartening everyone, from the nobles to the common soldiers. Tenderness marks the episode with Erpingham; humor and 'dramatic irony' distinguish the interviews with Bates, Court, and Williams. Pistol's rant and bluster come as effective dramatic relief in this great scene.

Act IV, Scene ii. The French leaders receive the call to battle in a spirit of boastful self-confidence.

Act IV, Scene iii, 1–128. With Henry's inspection of his forces, the delivery of his superb speech of courage and patriotism, and the final rejection of the French terms of surrender presented by Montjoy, the complication, or rising action, of the play is complete.

[1] Moulton makes this the turning point of the action. See "Character-Development in Henry V," *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1880–1886.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act IV, Scene iii, 129–132. Everything depends on the result of a single engagement. Henry orders his soldiers to advance, and the battle of Agincourt is joined.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act IV, Scene iv. The resolution, or falling action, begins with a broad comedy scene in which Pistol, with impudent bluster, wins advantage over a French gentleman soldier.

Act IV, Scene v. The French princes recognize that all is lost, and their only hope is that they may die in honor.

Act IV, Scene vi. Exeter tells Henry of the gallant deaths of Suffolk and York. Henry orders the French prisoners to be put to death.

Act IV, Scene vii. An amusing dialogue between Fluellen and Gower deals with Henry's order about the French prisoners. Henry in anger at the French for continuing to fight repeats his order. Montjoy again appears before the king, now as a humble suppliant for leave to the French to bury their dead. Humorous relief is afforded by a comic quarrel between Fluellen and Williams, provoked by the king.

Act IV, Scene viii. The comic quarrel ends happily, and after a dignified recital of the English losses in the battle, Henry gives thanks for the victory.

Act V, Prologue. Chorus pictures Henry's return to England, bridges a gap of nearly five years, and brings before the audience "Harry's back-return again to France."

Act V, Scene i. The comic portion of the play closes appropriately by Fluellen's forcing Pistol to eat the leek.

V. Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene ii. After a conference between Henry and the French court, the princes of France and the English commissioners retire to settle the final terms of peace, and the stage is left clear for Henry to make court to Katharine. "It is in harmony with the spirit of the play and with the character of Henry that it should close with no ostentatious heroics, but with the half-jocular, whole-earnest wooing of the French princess by the English king."—Dowden.

The Merchant of Venice

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The play opens with a blending of sadness and joy. In the busy mart of a Venetian street, Antonio, one of the city's influential merchants, is in eager talk with two young gallants who jest with him about his melancholy. They are presently joined by friends, among them one Bassanio, who, when the others have gone, confides his troubles to Antonio. He is in love with Portia, an heiress of renown, but he lacks means to further his suit. Antonio pledges his help, but, as his ventures are at sea, he instructs Bassanio to seek a loan in his name on the Rialto. Thus in the first scene of the first act the main plot—the wooing of Portia by Bassanio—and the subplot—the story of the bond—are skillfully foreshadowed.

Act I, Scene ii. In a room in Portia's palace, the heiress and her waiting-woman, Nerissa, are discovered. Portia complains of ennui, giving as the reason the many suitors who weary her with their adoration or woo her for her wealth. In the strange lottery, devised by her father, of the three caskets

whereof who chooses rightly chooses her, there is the haunting fear that she may be chosen by one whom she does not "rightly love"; for, before her father's death, she had seen in the company of the Marquis de Montferrat a scholar and soldier who holds her love's allegiance.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iii. Bassanio seeks out Shylock, a rich Jew, who, because of harsh treatment at their hands, hates the Christians. Antonio enters and they discuss the loan of three thousand ducats. To the Jew's bitter malevolence, Antonio and Bassanio oppose most unchristianlike recriminations—hatred pitted against hatred. Finally the bond is given, its forfeiture to be a pound of the merchant's flesh. Against Bassanio's better judgment, Antonio consents.

Act II, Scene i. The Prince of Morocco is introduced. His grandiloquent description of his worth and courage are so sincere, his naïveté and earnestness so disarming, that, unwelcome as his suit may be, Portia treats him with great consideration. She explains the terms of her father's will.

Act II, Scene ii. The humorous soliloquy with which this scene opens is a splendid example of dramatic contrast. The broad comedy of the play is introduced by Launcelot Gobbo, who wrestles with his conscience as to whether or not he remain in the service of the Jew. He meets his father and, taking advantage of the old man's blindness, delights in confusing him. After much badinage, he reveals his identity and tells him he has decided to leave Shylock and enter the service of Bassanio.

Act II, Scene iii. Launcelot Gobbo takes leave of Jessica, Shylock's daughter. She gives him a letter for Lorenzo, her Christian lover. Very subtly a tragic element is woven into the beauty and charm of her young love's dream.

Act II, Scene iv. Masked revelers are preparing for a farewell supper to Bassanio. They discuss the plans for Lorenzo's elopement with the fair Jessica.

Act II, Scene v. Shylock prepares to attend Bassanio's feast. With a sense of foreboding, he warns Jessica to stay within doors as he gives the keys of his house into her keeping. Here we have a splendid example of dramatic irony. Whatever indignation we may feel toward Shylock it is mingled with compassion as we see his misplaced trust.

Act II, Scene vi. Dressed as a torchbearer to Lorenzo, Jessica escapes, carrying with her a goodly dower in ducats and rich jewels. Another love interest now parallels that of Portia and Bassanio.

Act II, Scene vii. The Prince of Morocco makes his choice. He chooses the gold casket, only to find his "suit is cold."

Act II, Scene viii. Salarino and Salanio act as a Greek chorus and tell us of Jessica's flight, of Shylock's despair and his desire for vengeance, and the dire news of the loss of Antonio's ships.

Act II, Scene ix. The prince of Arragon impatiently awaits his turn in making choice of the caskets. His arrogance gets less consideration from the wise Portia than did the fervid pleading of Morocco. He chooses the silver casket and realizes

> With one fool's head I came to woo
> But I go away with two.

As he departs, Bassanio's arrival is announced.

Act III, Scene i. There is news on the Rialto that Antonio's ships are lost. Shylock hears it with unfeigned glee. Scorn, anguish, sorrow, and bitter hate find expression in his broken utterances. One human touch—the reference to Leah, his wife—keeps the tragic greatness of the Jew before us. His malevolent hate finds expression in his command to Tubal: "Go, Tubal, fee me an officer. . . . I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit" (lines 109–111).

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene ii, 1–227. This scene is the copestone of the plan; the three plots are co-related. Bassanio, by choice of the leaden casket, wins Portia and so achieves his quest. What seemed an eccentric test has proved indeed a "good inspiration." Gratiano announces his betrothal to Nerissa; the lovers exchange rings. Lorenzo and Jessica bring Antonio's letter.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene ii, 228–320. With the reading of Antonio's letter the falling action begins. Bassanio learns of the loss of all the merchant's ventures, of Shylock's determination to exact the pound of flesh, and of Antonio's request that Bassanio come to him in his extremity. Portia offers to pay the bond "twenty times over." After the marriage ceremony the bridegroom hurries to the succor of his friend.

Act III, Scene iii. Deaf to all Antonio's pleading, Shylock, with the law of Venice on his side, commands the jailer to guard his prisoner.

Act III, Scene iv. Portia leaves her household in charge of Lorenzo and Jessica, and hurries toward Padua to consult with the learned Doctor Bellario in Antonio's defense. In her coach she tells Nerissa of her plans and the intended disguise.

Act III, Scene v. Even the tragic fate of Antonio cannot destroy the gladsome foolery of the lovers left at Belmont. Launcelot, always happy in his fidelity to Jessica, plays the rude philosopher for their amusement.

Act IV, Scene i. The Trial Scene, as it is aptly called, is one of the best known scenes in Shakespeare. In sharp contrast to the ordered beauty and peace of Portia's home is the court of justice with its imposing magnificence and the fury of turbu-

lent human passion. Like a wolf at bay the Jew answers in kind the taunts of his enemies. The Duke is distraught at the evident miscarriage of judicial law, when Portia comes to the rescue. The mercy speech is an arraignment not only of Shylock's revenge but of the uncharitable gloating of Antonio's friends. The merchant is saved, but in our joy we have infinite pity for the beaten Shylock.

Act IV, Scene ii. The rings refused by Bassanio and Gratiano at the close of the triumphant verdict are now yielded to Portia and Nerissa at Antonio's request.

Act V, Scene i, 1–126. Bathed in moonlight, the beckoning candle shining afar, Belmont has never seemed to its mistress so nearly the very home of peace. Portia and Nerissa return to the strains of Stephano's music. The action is in an ideal world.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene i, 127–278. In such beauty, Bassanio and Gratiano are welcomed home. The lovers' quarrel about the rings adds a touch of comic realism. Antonio acts as peacemaker as well as friend and hears from Portia of the safe return of all his ships. We take leave of them at dawn—a happy, joyous company.

Much Ado about Nothing

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The opening scene explains the situation, introduces the more important characters, and indicates their relation to one another. Sparkling dialogue in prose prevails; it passes into verse at the close, when the deeper emotional

interest of the play is disclosed. Benedick and Beatrice begin their skirmishes of wit. The only shadow is that which falls from the sullen attitude of Don John. Claudio's passion for Hero leads him to question Benedick about her, and this reveals Benedick's greater interest in Beatrice. Don Pedro arranges to mask as Claudio at the "revelling to-night" (line 299) and win Hero for him.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene ii. The complication begins with the introduction of such hearsay evidence as Antonio conveys to Leonato. An eavesdropping servant's blunder suggests what may lead afterwards to much ado in the more humorous developments.

Act I, Scene iii. Don John's circumstances and revengeful nature are clearly shown. Borachio's information supplies an opportunity for revenge, and the more tragic entanglements begin.

Act II, Scene i. The main plot is well advanced in this brilliant scene. In spite of Don John, Hero and Claudio are betrothed, though Claudio's readiness to believe the villain's insinuations prepares for his behavior later in the play. The skirmishes of wit between Beatrice and Benedick, made more acute by having had to hear what they think of each other, almost develop into open war. The scene closes with the announcement by Don Pedro that he will "undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th' one with th' other" (lines 334–337).

Act II, Scene ii. The counterplot of Don John and his associates is unfolded. Hero is to be personated at midnight by Margaret, her 'waiting gentlewoman.'

Act II, Scene iii. The comic subplot to bring Benedick and Beatrice "into a mountain of affection" is successful as far as

Benedick is concerned. Snared as a spy, he is made to hear how desperately Beatrice loves him. Between Benedick's soliloquy (lines 7–33), balanced by his superb soliloquy of confession (lines 202–222), and the main dialogue comes Balthasar's song, "Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more," with its mocking echo of the theme of the play.

Act III, Scene i. The complication of the comic subplot is further advanced. Beatrice is caught in the net of the good-natured intriguers, and she is made to overhear how desperately Benedick loves her.

Act III, Scene ii. The comic subplot and the counterplot are linked together and brought into vital connection with the main plot. While Don Pedro and those who have helped him, including Claudio, are making merry over the success of the trick played on Benedick, Don John appears and openly accuses Hero of unfaithfulness to Claudio.

Act III, Scene iii. Dogberry and Verges, the most famous specimens of blundering Bumbledom in literature, are introduced giving the stupidest of instructions to the stupidest of watchmen. By chance the watchmen hear the drunken Borachio tell Conrade the story of the counterplot and they arrest them. The arrest at this stage is a master stroke of dramatic or constructive irony. Readers or spectators are made aware of a happening the true significance of which is unknown to the actors. Thus in this play the artistic demands of comedy are satisfied in what would otherwise have been an overwhelming tragic situation in the climax, or crisis, of the plot—the repudiation scene in the church. Kreyssig's criticism that Shakespeare here neglected the necessary dramatic sequence of cause and effect in his account of the discovery of the plot is well answered by F. S. Boas: "This roundabout method in which the conspiracy comes to light is entirely in harmony with the tortuous direction that events take throughout the play, while it serves as the source of further complications, and introduces new actors on the scene."

Act III, Scene iv. The dramatic value of this scene in Hero's apartment is that it gives a sense of bustling preparation for the marriage and intensifies interest in the two heroines. A presentiment of tragedy is heavy on Hero's heart. Beatrice reveals her passion for Benedick even in bantering talk with Margaret who, utterly unconscious of the mischief she has done, is in the highest spirits.

Act III, Scene v. In this scene the dramatic irony which prevails throughout the play reaches its height. Dogberry and Verges bring their discovery of the plot against Hero to the governor, the father of the threatened bride. "The fussy haste of Leonato, with a bridal ceremony on his hands, and the fussy self-importance of Dogberry and Verges, resolved to make the most of their accidental find, clash together, and delay the understanding of what has happened until it is too late."—Moulton.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act IV, Scene i, 1–149. In the rejection of Hero by Claudio before the altar every strand of interest in the weaving of the plot is crossed. This repudiation tightens all the elements of main plot and subplots, to use Aristotle's famous figure, into a compact knot of general entanglement.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act IV, Scene i, 150–249. The beginning of the resolution is singularly impressive. Friar Francis suspects a concealed wrong; he has read innocence in Hero's face, and in a passage of noble poetry he counsels that over her be thrown the veil of a reputed death until the truth has been learned and slander has been changed to remorse.

Act IV, Scene i, 250–327. The resolution of the comic plot is in the closest relation to the climax of the main plot. The seeming success of the counterplot brings Beatrice and Benedick together, and they plan to do what in them lies to prove the innocence of slandered Hero.

Act IV, Scene ii. The trial of Borachio and Conrade in its comic setting marks another stage in the resolution, and the evidence makes clear that Friar Francis's pious intrigue is being successfully carried out. Dogberry's closing speech (lines 69–80) is one of the triumphs of the literature of broad humor. It goes far to adjust the balance of comedy in an Act which began in tragedy and pathos.

Act V, Scene i. Antonio and Leonato blunderingly seek to avenge the wrong done to Hero; Benedick, spurred on by Beatrice, challenges Claudio; and when Claudio learns from Borachio the truth of the villainy perpetrated, he offers reparation, promises to hang a penitential epitaph on Hero's tomb, and, as a recompense to the family honor, undertakes to marry Leonato's niece, who is, says the father, "almost the copy of my child that's dead" (line 276). This scene helps to establish the friendly relations which existed among the more important characters during the early stages of the complication, but which were dislocated by the shock in the temporary success of the counterplot.

Act V, Scene ii. An episodic scene in which Benedick and Beatrice are shown as lovers. Without taking from the radiant gayety of Beatrice or the sturdy manliness of Benedick, love has softened the edge of witty raillery in both, but has left the charm of something ever to be discovered each in each.

Act V, Scene iii. Claudio reads his penitential epitaph and hangs it with fitting ceremony upon the tomb. The song "Pardon, goddess of the night," and the alternate rhyme in the dialogue which follows, give a dignity and solemnity befitting the occasion and the place.

V. Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iv. In a Shakespeare comedy the dénouement is swiftly but deftly sketched and trembles with the joyousness of recognition and reconciliation. When Claudio comes to wed the niece of Leonato, he receives the hand of Hero risen from the death of her slandered fame. The humor of the play began with the flouting of Benedick by Beatrice; it ends with the spectacle of Benedick stopping her mouth with a kiss. It is not without significance that of all Shakespeare's plays, *Much Ado about Nothing* should be the only one that closes with a dance: "Come, come, we are friends: let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels. . . . Strike up, pipers" (lines 112–122).

As You Like It

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The play opens with Orlando's passionate outburst against his elder brother. Adam, an old servitor, listens with patient sympathy. We learn that Sir Rowland de Boys at his death had left his estate to his eldest son, Oliver, and charged him to bring up his younger brothers with all 'good breeding.' Jaques he keeps at school, but for Orlando he mocks his gentility with his education. So great is Oliver's hatred toward Orlando that he inveigles Charles, the Court wrestler, to kill him in the coming wrestling match.

Act I, Scene ii. Rosalind, daughter of the banished Duke, bemoans her exiled father. Her cousin Celia comforts her with the assurance of *her* devotion and loyalty. Touchstone, the Court fool, joins them and with the quaint wisdom of all Shakespeare's fools restores their natural gayety. Le Beau, a

most ceremonious courtier, invites the cousins to witness the wrestling match. The ladies try to dissuade Orlando from entering the combat. Victorious against the wrestler, Orlando finds that "something weaker masters" him, and Rosalind too knows that the gallant youth has overthrown more than his enemies. Orlando's victory meets no recognition by Duke Frederick, who refuses to reward the son of his old enemy. Orlando is warned to escape, and a hint of the future action is given in

> this Duke
> Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece.

"The Plot of *As You Like It*," as Quiller-Couch says, "is no great matter." But even so there is a certain adherence to the art structure of drama.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iii. Rosalind confesses to her cousin her love for Orlando. Duke Frederick's banishment of Rosalind as a traitor links the stories of the play and the fortunes of the lovers. Celia's love for Rosalind devises a means of escape. With Touchstone the princesses make their way to the Forest of Arden. "All converges speech after speech, scene after scene to the flight and to the forest. . . . The first act makes the framework of the play. It tells of all the tangles which Rosalind unties in the end—the quarrel between the two Dukes, the quarrel between Orlando and Oliver, the dull anger of Duke Frederick, the fate of the banished Duke, the flight with him of many great lords to the forest. The working of the main quarrel is the cause why Rosalind and Celia take their flight; and Touchstone with them; is the cause also why Orlando is banished and afterwards Oliver. And, finally, out of this quarrel emerges Duke Frederick's repentance and the full solution of the drama."—Stopford Brooke.

Act II, Scene i. Duke Senior holds court in the Forest of Arden. In sharp contrast to the intrigue and 'painted pomp' of Court life are the simplicity and fresh beauty of this sylvan solitude. Jaques, that man 'compact of jars,' maintains that even here is found the 'stubbornness of fortune,' that hunters are tyrants too and usurp the deer—the native burghers of this desert city.

Act II, Scene ii. The flight of Celia, Touchstone, and Rosalind is discovered. Duke Frederick suspects Orlando, and in anger summons Oliver to his presence.

Act III, Scene iii. Adam warns Orlando of Oliver's plan to set fire to his lodging. The faithful old servant offers his savings to his master's disinherited son, and together they flee to the Forest of Arden.

Act II, Scene iv. Weary and exhausted, Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone enter the enchanted Forest. Her man's apparel helps Rosalind little, but as Ganymede she bravely urges Celia to have courage. Silvius, a shepherd, is overheard confessing his love for Phebe to old Corin, who rebukes his lovesickness. Rosalind's tact and courtesy secure for the wanderers a cottage, sheepcote, and flocks from Corin's churlish master.

Act II, Scene v. Only music can interpret the mysterious joy of a primeval forest, and Amiens's song unites this joy to the joy of new-found love. Even Jaques's cynicism is powerless to rob it of its beauty.

Act II, Scene vi. Exhausted by the journey, old Adam fain would measure out his grave. Orlando, to whom Arden is as yet an 'uncouth forest' and a 'desert,' goes in search of food.

Act II, Scene vii. As the action of a play is advanced by other means than physical movements, the words of Jaques—his moralizing and philosophizing—mark an important advance in the plot.

The "A fool, a fool!—I met a fool i' the forest" and "All the world's a stage" speeches form an integral part of the love story of Orlando and Rosalind. To the company of the Duke

in contemplative mood comes Orlando with sword drawn, demanding food. He finds in Duke Senior a friend and the 'uncouth forest' becomes a place of glamour.

Act III, Scene i. A nemesis of misfortune follows Oliver's unnatural treatment of his brother. His lands and goods are taken into custody, and he himself banished by order of the usurping Duke.

Act III, Scene ii, 1–281. Orlando gives free rein to his love for Rosalind. He writes verses to his fair mistress and carves them on the trees. Touchstone, court jester though he be, finds food for his wit in overawing the simple country folk. His delight in confusing Corin with learned allusions is spontaneous and in keeping with nature herself. Celia confides to Rosalind that Orlando is the author of the verses, and even as they speak he comes in, talking with Jaques.

When the scene of *As You Like It* shifts to the Forest of Arden, where remorseless Time seems foiled, we have, in fine, a court pastoral but with real characters; and the climax of the play is the encounter of Orlando and Rosalind.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene ii, 282–402. "Do you hear, forester?" and the conversation following weaves into a well-tied knot all the interests of the play. Rosalind, secure in her man's attire, finds joy in provoking Orlando's protestations of love for Rosalind.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene iii. It is a pleasant device of Shakespeare's to parody his serious love scenes by those of humorous aspect —things apart, yet related to the main plot. Touchstone meets Audrey and persuades her to marry him. Jaques, evidently

sceptical about Touchstone's honorable intentions, insists on a lawful priest and a legal union.

Act III, Scene iv. Rosalind, unashamed, expresses her depth of love for Orlando. Lyly's *Campaspe* is not more idyllic.

Act III, Scene v. Quiller-Couch says of this scene: "The pastoral being granted, we may recognize excellent workmanship in the Silvius and Phebe episode. To have garbed Rosalind as a boy without making a girl fall in love with him would have been to miss a plain opportunity—as plain a one as the sight of the bloody cloth at which Rosalind faints. It doubles the intrigue, and it provides with due irony one of the most charming chiming quartets in all Comedy. . . . It is Lyly carried to the *n*th power."

Act IV, Scene i. Jaques finds in Rosalind such piquant charm that his humorous melancholy is betrayed into something very like healthy eager interest in life.

When Orlando appears, 'Monsieur Traveller' leaves with Rosalind's merry scorn ringing in his ears. Before her cousin Rosalind draws her lover on to intimate declarations of actual love-making and finally insists on going through the ceremony of marriage with Celia as priest.

Act IV, Scene ii. An episodic scene redolent with joy and music.

Act IV, Scene iii. The pastoral element; the subplot and the main plot are beautifully interwoven. Silvius brings Rosalind a love letter from Phebe. Oliver enters with the bloody handkerchief. Rosalind faints. Celia and Oliver fall in love.

Act V, Scene i. Touchstone and the natural fool William meet. Audrey, with a coquetry worthy of her court-bred sisters, declares in favor of her new-found admirer. William is ignominiously dismissed.

Act V, Scene ii. Oliver declares his love for Aliena (Celia), and bestows his whole estate upon Orlando. Rosalind declares that Orlando shall marry his Rosalind when Oliver marries Celia—and that shall be tomorrow. Silvius and Phebe too are

promised abundant satisfaction. All the love threads are to be gathered up, and the tangles unraveled by this 'Ganymede' who has bewitched the courtly and simple alike in the wild-wood freedom of the forest.

Act V, Scene iii. A fleeting glimpse of Audrey and Touchstone. The rustic sincerity of the awkward clumsy maid makes appeal to the hypersensitive court fool. Music and song pervade the scene.

Act V, Scene iv, 1–101. Duke Senior receives the company. Rosalind promises to restore his daughter to the exiled father, to bring to Orlando his very Rosalind, and to see that Phebe and Silvius marry whom they should.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iv, 102–192. Attended by Hymen, Rosalind and Celia enter undisguised. All four couples are happily married. Jaques de Boys brings news that Duke Frederick has repented and is about to enter a religious order. Jaques too will abandon the court "for other than for dancing measures."

The Epilogue spoken by Rosalind brings us back to the everyday world; but to that world in some way glorified by the ideal which is ever truer than the real.

Twelfth Night

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The play opens in an atmosphere of brooding sentiment, and the keynote is struck in Orsino's first words. The scene discloses his love for Olivia (who is mourning for her brother) and her rejection of his suit, which are the basis of the main plot.

Act I, Scene ii. The heroine, Viola, is introduced. Safe from shipwreck, but in an agony of suspense over the fate of her twin brother, she learns that the ruler of the country where she finds herself is Orsino, and additional explanatory details of his relation to Olivia are related. As a means of self-protection, Viola plans to disguise herself as a page and enter Orsino's service. Two elements of plot interest have now been introduced, and Viola's words about her brother prepare for the appearance of Sebastian later in the play.

Act I, Scene iii. Three active agents in the underplot—Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria—are introduced in a fitting scene of roistering and drunken merriment in Olivia's house. The scene suggests infinite possibilities of humorous situation to follow.

Act I, Scene iv. Viola, disguised as the page Cesario in Orsino's service, is sent on a love embassy to Olivia. As it becomes clear that Viola herself has fallen in love with Orsino, another important element in the plot interest is introduced.

Act I, Scene v, 1–158. With the introduction of Olivia, Malvolio, and Feste, the exposition of the play is complete, and the complication begins when, in the thick of a wrangle between Malvolio and Feste, in which Olivia sides with Feste, Viola enters.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene v, 159–295. So passionately does Viola plead for her master that Olivia yields her heart, not to Orsino, but to the fair go-between. When Viola leaves, Olivia sends Malvolio after her with a ring, and the request that "the youth will come this way to-morrow." Olivia's love for Cesario is a most important element in the complication.

Act II, Scene i. The dialogue between Sebastian and Antonio emphasizes the confusion of identity element in the main plot. Sebastian tells how strong was the resemblance between himself and his twin sister, whom he believes to be dead. An-

tonio determines to follow Sebastian to the court of Orsino, though he has many enemies there.

Act II, Scene ii. When Malvolio has given Viola the ring, and with it Olivia's message, Viola reads the secret of Olivia's heart. The motive interest is increased.

Act II, Scene iii. The comic subplot is advanced. Malvolio breaks in upon the revel-rout of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Feste, and when he leaves, they agree to play him a trick contrived by Maria. He is to be deluded into the belief that Olivia is in love with him. This is the first important element in the subplot.

Act II, Scene iv. The emotional interest is intensified. In the famous lines beginning, "She never told her love," Viola tells her own passion for Orsino, while she continues her service as the confidante of his love for Olivia. The scene is a masterpiece of dramatic or constructive irony.

Act II, Scene v. Maria's ruse is successful. Malvolio's self-love and sense of self-importance make him an easy dupe, and the subplot interest deepens.

Act III, Scene i. Viola again visits Olivia, and Olivia's love for Orsino's proxy-wooer becomes more intense. She makes an open declaration of her passion.

Act III, Scene ii. A trick played on Sir Andrew and Viola comes as a second important element in the subplot. On the instigation of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, jealous of the favors shown to the page by Olivia, challenges Viola to a duel. The subplot is now firmly linked to the main plot.

Act III, Scene iii. Sebastian, followed by Antonio, arrives in the city, and with his arrival is set in motion the machinery which will result in the resolution of all the elements of the complication. The mistaken identity implicit in the resemblance between Sebastian and Viola dominates the action of the play from now on to the dénouement.

Act III, Scene iv, 1–288. The success of the trick played upon the solemn 'yellow-legg'd stork' culminates in Malvolio's

being shut up as a madman. This climax of one action in the subplot is in the closest relation to the climax of the other—the duel between Sir Andrew and Viola.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene iv, 289–372. The entrance of Antonio crosses every strand of interest in the weaving of the plot. To use Aristotle's famous figure, it tightens all the elements of main plot and subplot into a compact knot of general entanglement.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act IV, Scene i. Sir Andrew's attack upon Sebastian, whom of course he mistakes for Viola, is the first important element in the resolution. It foreshadows the coming together of brother and sister, and suggests a happy solution for Olivia's passion for the page.

Act IV, Scene ii. Feste's visit to "Malvolio the lunatic" in the dark room and his conversation with him in the assumed character of "Sir Topas the curate," result in a promise to take a letter from Malvolio to Olivia. The resolution of one important element in the subplot is now clearly indicated.

Act IV, Scene iii. As the dénouement approaches, the action gains in swiftness. This short scene goes far in the resolution of the main plot.

Act V, Scene i, 1–200. After badinage between Feste and Fabian over what turns out to be Malvolio's letter to Olivia, Antonio in talk with Orsino gives the necessary details of his connection with Sebastian. The several charges against Viola—Olivia's that she had married her, Sir Toby's and Sir Andrew's that she had beaten them, and Orsino's that she had deceived him—are cleared by Sebastian when he enters.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene i, 201–395. When Viola and Sebastian meet in the presence of the leading characters of the play, and the resemblance between them is obvious to all, the resolution is complete. As Orsino cannot have Olivia, he transfers his affections to Viola; Malvolio's letter is delivered to Olivia, who now sends for him and has the subplot 'practice' explained to her; and Fabian tells that, as a reward for her cleverness, Sir Toby has married Maria. "He, who has been so busy in gulling others, ends by exposing himself to the permanent derision which accompanies a *mésalliance*."—Boas. Feste's epilogue-song, to the accompaniment of the jester's bells, is a fitting last word in this high comedy of romantic sentiment and exquisite satire.

Julius Cæsar

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The popularity of Cæsar with the Roman mob and the jealousy of the official classes—the two motive forces of the play—are revealed. The fickleness of the mob is shown in a spirit of comedy; the antagonism of Marullus and Flavius strikes the note of tragedy.

Act I, Scene ii, 1–303. The supreme characters are introduced, and in their opening speeches each reveals his temperament and foreshadows the part which he will play. The exposition of the situation is now complete.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene ii, 304–319. In soliloquy Cassius unfolds his scheme for entangling Brutus in the conspiracy, and the dramatic complication begins.

Act I, Scene iii. Casca, excited by the fiery portents that bode disaster to the state, is persuaded by Cassius to join "an enterprise of honourable-dangerous consequence" (lines 123–124). The conspirators are assigned to their various posts, and Cassius engages to secure Brutus before morning.

Act II, Scene i. The humane character of Brutus, as master, husband, and citizen, is elaborated, and his attitude to Cæsar and the conspiracy of assassination clearly shown. He joins the conspirators—apparently their leader, in reality their tool. In lines 162–183 he pleads that the life of Antony be spared, and thus unconsciously prepares for his own ruin.

Act II, Scene ii. Cæsar is uneasy at the omens and portents, and gives heed to Calpurnia's entreaties to remain at home, but he yields to the importunity of Decius and starts for the Capitol, thus advancing the plans of the conspirators. The dramatic contrast between Cæsar and Brutus is strengthened by that between Calpurnia in this scene and Portia in the preceding.

Act II, Scene iii. The dramatic interest is intensified by the warning of Artemidorus and the suggestion of a way of escape for the protagonist.

Act II, Scene iv. The interest is further intensified by the way in which readers and spectators are made to share the anxiety of Portia.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene i, 1–122. The dramatic movement is now rapid, and the tension, indicated by the short whispered sentences of all the speakers except Cæsar, is only increased by his imperial utterances, which show utter unconsciousness of the impending doom. In the assassination all the complicating forces—the self-confidence of Cæsar, the unworldly patriotism of Brutus, the political chicanery of Cassius, the unscrupulousness of Casca, and the fickleness of the mob—bring about an event which changes the lives of all the characters

concerned and threatens the stability of the Roman nation. The death of Cæsar is the climax of the physical action of the play; it is at the same time the emotional crisis from which Brutus comes with altered destiny.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene i, 123–298. With Brutus's "Soft! who comes here? A friend of Antony's" begins the resolution, or falling action, of the play. "The fortune of the conspirators, hitherto in the ascendant, now declines, while 'Cæsar's spirit' surely and steadily prevails against them."—Verity. Against the advice of Cassius, Brutus gives Antony permission to deliver a public funeral oration. Antony in a soliloquy shows his determination to avenge Cæsar, and the first scene of the falling action closes with the announcement that Octavius is within seven leagues of Rome.

Act III, Scene ii–Scene iii. The orations of Antony, in vivid contrast to the conciliatory but unimpassioned speeches of Brutus, fire the people and liberate fresh forces in the falling action. Brutus and Cassius have to fly the city, riding "like madmen through the gates of Rome." In unreasoning fury the mob tears to pieces an innocent poet who has the same name as a conspirator.

Act IV, Scene i. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, having formed a triumvirate of which Antony is the master spirit, agree on a proscription list and join forces against Brutus and Cassius, who "are levying powers."

Act IV, Scene ii. Brutus and Cassius, long parted by pride and obstinacy, meet to discuss a plan of action.

Act IV, Scene iii. All critics agree that this is one of the most famous individual scenes in Shakespeare. Its intensely human interest is always conceded, but its dramatic propriety, because of what seems a 'dragging' tendency, has been often

questioned. The scene opens with Brutus and Cassius bandying recriminations, and the quarrel of the two generals bodes disaster to their cause. As the discussion proceeds, they yield points and become reconciled. Brutus then quietly but with peculiar pathos tells of Portia's death by her own hand. In all the great tragedies, with the notable exception of *Othello*, when the forces of the resolution, or falling action, are gathering towards the dénouement, Shakespeare introduces a scene which appeals to an emotion different from any of those excited elsewhere in the play. "As a rule this new emotion is pathetic; and the pathos is not terrible or lacerating, but, even if painful, is accompanied by the sense of beauty and by an outflow of admiration or affection, which come with an inexpressible sweetness after the tension of the crisis and the first counterstroke. So it is with the reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius, and the arrival of the news of Portia's death."—Bradley. While the shadow of her tragic passing overhangs the spirits of both, Brutus overbears the shrewd, cautious counsel of Cassius and persuades him to assent to the fatal policy of offering battle at Philippi. That night Cæsar's ghost appears to Brutus.

Act V, Scene i. The action now falls rapidly to the quick, decisive movement of the dénouement. The antagonists are now face to face. Brutus and Cassius have done what Antony and Octavius hoped that they would do. The opposing generals hold a brief parley in which Brutus intimates that he is willing to effect a reconciliation, but Antony rejects his proposals and bluntly charges him and Cassius with the willful murder of Cæsar. Cassius reminds Brutus of his warning that Antony should have fallen when Cæsar did. Antony, Octavius, and their army retire, and the scene closes with the noble farewell without hope between Brutus and Cassius.

Act V, Scene ii. The opposing armies meet on the field, and a final flare-up of hope in the breast of Brutus is indicated by his spirited order to Messala to charge. The scene implies that Cassius was defeated by being left without support by Brutus.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iii. The charge ordered by Brutus has been successful, and Octavius has been driven back, but Cassius is thus left unguarded, and Antony's forces surround him. He takes refuge on a hill and sends Titinius to see "whether yond troops are friend or enemy." Believing Titinius to be slain, he begs Pindarus to stab him, and Cassius dies "even with the sword that kill'd" Cæsar. With the same sword Titinius then slays himself, and Brutus, when Messala bears the news to him, exclaims in words that strike the keynote of the whole falling action and dénouement:

> O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
> Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
> In our own proper entrails.

Act V, Scene iv. Like Hamlet, Brutus at the last is a man of supreme action. He rallies his forces for a last attack. With hopeless failure before him, he is at once a heroic figure and one of infinite pathos. Young Cato falls. Lucilius is attacked; assuming the name of Brutus, he is not killed but taken prisoner. Antony recognizes him and gives orders that he be treated kindly.

Act V, Scene v. Brutus dies by his own sword, and his last words tell the story of failure and defeat. Like a true Roman, he meets his doom without a murmur of complaint. He had been true to his ideals. The tragic dénouement comes as the inevitable consequence, not of willful sin, but of a noble mistake. In death he commands the veneration of both Antony and Octavius, who pronounce over his body the great interpretation of his character, and in their speeches the tragedy closes as with a chant of victory for the hero of defeat.

Hamlet

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction

Act I, Scene i. The play opens amid agitation and gloom (see note, I, i, 1–3). The serious situation of affairs at Elsinore is disclosed; the character of the late king is described, and his reappearance after death indicates a mysterious wrong to be righted. The adventures of young Fortinbras are recited, and his prowess prepares for the important position he is to assume at the close of the play.

Act I, Scene ii. The corrupt conditions at court are revealed, and Hamlet is introduced, brooding over the situation and dejected at the thought of his mother's hasty marriage to such a man as he conceives Claudius to be. In this frame of mind he is told of the Ghost, and his suspicions are aroused.

Act I, Scene iii. Polonius and Ophelia are introduced, and the corrupt influence of the court is further shown in the dialogue between Laertes and his father. The relations between Hamlet and Ophelia are indicated (see Coleridge's note, quoted in annotation, I, iii).

Act I, Scene iv—Scene v, 1–28. After a remarkable self-revelation by Hamlet of his mental attitude and point of view, the Ghost appears to him, and in words that develop to a thrilling climax tells him definitely that his father was murdered, and gives him his first command, "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder." The exposition of the play is now complete. The leading characters have been introduced; the opening situations are explained; the machinery is ready to be set in motion.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth

Act I, Scene v, 29–181. A definite motive for action by Hamlet has now been supplied. With his spirited reply, lines 29–31, to the Ghost's call to revenge begins the complication.

The machinery of the play is now in motion. The first distinct element in the complication is in the second command of the Ghost, lines 85–86 (see note).

Act II, Scene i. The quiet talk between Polonius and Reynaldo, lines 1–73, serves as a relief to the excitement of the preceding scene and throws more light on the characters of Polonius and Laertes; the conversation between Ophelia and her father, lines 73–119, first introduces Hamlet with his 'antic disposition on.' Polonius implies that at court the prince is already regarded as mad, and he concludes that he is crazed for love of Ophelia. Whether Hamlet's appearance and behavior as described by Ophelia were part of the 'antic disposition,' or simply indicated his intense emotion at taking leave of one whom he passionately loved, is an interesting question.

Act II, Scene ii. Among the dramatic motives in this long scene are (1) the varied effect of Hamlet's 'antic disposition' upon the groups at court represented by Claudius, Gertrude, the newly arrived Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Polonius, and Ophelia; (2) the emphasizing of Hamlet's dilatoriness by the return of the ambassadors sent to Norway (I, ii), their mission accomplished; (3) renewed interest in the cause of Fortinbras; and (4) the arrival of the players, and the beginning of Hamlet's plans for the great play scene. Throughout may be traced the working of what Bradley calls the "principle of alternation," an oscillating movement of the action, now in favor of Hamlet, now in favor of Claudius.

Act III, Scene i. Hamlet's interview with Ophelia brings the crisis in her life history (see note, III, i, 105), and it convinces Claudius that love is not the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior. Suspecting the true reason, he plans to send his nephew to England.

Act III, Scene ii. This scene is a triumph of dramatic construction. It opens quietly with the famous exposition of the principles of practical dramatic art in the instructions to the players, and a conversation with Horatio in which Hamlet

"Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft"

Hamlet, from the Cower Monument, Stratford-on-Avon

takes his friend into his confidence. As the court assembles to witness the play, Hamlet's increasing nervous tension betrays itself in every word and action. Then comes his complete triumph in the 'unkennelling' of the 'occulted guilt,' as Claudius rushes from the scene with the cry, "Give me some light! Away!"

Act III, Scene iii, 1–72. As the climax or crisis of the play approaches, the oscillation of the action seems to cease; plotter and counter-plotter appear to have equal advantage. The play not only convinced Hamlet of Claudius's guilt; it showed Claudius how dangerous Hamlet was, and he completes his arrangements for getting rid of him forever.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point[1]

Act III, Scene iii, 73–98. Dramatic literature has no passage of greater insight or power than Hamlet's sparing of Claudius when he finds the king alone and wholly in his power. This is the turning point in the play. From now on to the catastrophe the antagonizing forces control the action.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence

Act III, Scene iv. In this, the "Closet Scene," the emotional intensity of the play is at full tide, and poignantly effective is the inversion of the natural order in the administration of scathing rebuke to a mother by a son. The leading dramatic motives of the scene are the killing of Polonius—which is in sharp contrast to the sparing of Claudius—and the reappearance of the Ghost "to whet" the "almost blunted purpose" and recall the previous mandate, "nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught." The climactic significance of Hamlet's refusal to kill Claudius is emphasized by this reappearance.

[1] Many interpreters and students of dramatic technique find the turning point in the play scene, III, ii, 210–247.

Act IV, Scene i–Scene iii. The consequences of the killing of Polonius are revealed in the strengthening of the case of Claudius against Hamlet. Claudius is justified in guarding the prince until he can be sent away.

Act IV, Scene iv. The references to young Fortinbras in I, i, and II, ii, have prepared for his appearance in this scene. His character as a strong, practical man of affairs affords an effective contrast to that of Hamlet, and this contrast is expressed by Hamlet himself in the great soliloquy with which the scene closes.

Act IV, Scene v. More consequences of the killing of Polonius are revealed. The death of her father following the loss of her lover is the cause of Ophelia's madness. Laertes, too, is home from Paris vowing swift revenge for his father's murder and hurried, unworthy burial.

Act IV, Scene vi. The letter to Horatio brings Hamlet again to the front, and announces that the news of his return to Denmark will soon be known to Claudius.

Act IV, Scene vii. Hamlet's return stimulates Claudius to quick action. Claudius finds Laertes a willing tool in the arrangement of a base plot against the life of Hamlet, and the death of his sister strengthens Laertes in his scheme for revenge.

Act V, Scene i. Like the "Porter Scene" in *Macbeth*, the grave-digging scene is a signal instance of relief in Shakespearian tragedy by the introduction of humorous matter. The humor here is not out of keeping with the scene of action, and passes naturally into the moralizing of Hamlet. In high tragedy the sympathy must at the close be with the hero, and the fact that it is Ophelia's grave that is being dug, strangely increases the sense of pity for Hamlet. By the grave his love of her finds passionate expression. This confession makes him known to Laertes; and the antagonizing forces, external and internal, conspire to overpower the hero and foreshadow his defeat.

Act V, Scene ii, 1–214. To complete the resolution or falling action, Hamlet tells Horatio how he managed to defeat the king's scheme for getting rid of him. The brief scene with Osric follows, giving a new glimpse of Hamlet's wit and intellectual edge, and then comes the invitation to the fatal fencing match. The falling action closes significantly with Hamlet's expression of a presentiment of evil.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion

Act V, Scene ii, 215–393. The final consequences of the death of Polonius come in the holocaust of the catastrophe. At the last, Hamlet is a man of supreme action, who dominates the awful dénouement. With dramatic fitness the best and the worst in each of the characters find expression in their final speeches. The nobility and the sweetness of Hamlet's nature exhale in his last words, so hauntingly beautiful after the fierce invective with which he stabs Claudius to his doom. With the entry of Fortinbras a new order begins, and day breaks along the valley of the shadow of death.

Othello

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The opening scene reveals Iago's nature and presents the material out of which he develops three of his intrigues. The essence of Iago's character is set forth—the suggester of evil and the inciter to evil deeds. As he here carries the countenance of goodness and incites others to evil, so is he set forth in all the succeeding scenes. Until the final tragic ending his attitude toward Othello is to "show out a flag and sign of love" (line 146). The reader is left in sus-

pense only as to the means by which Iago is to work out his wickedness and as to the extent to which chance will aid him.

Act I, Scene ii. The sharp contrast in character in the portrayal of which Shakespeare is a master is developed here when the nobility of Othello's nature is set by a few masterly strokes against the hypocrisy of Iago. Throughout the drama the interest centers in these two men—the one a mountain of magnanimity, the other an unfathomable lake of evil, while the height of the one and the depth of the other seem enhanced by this close relation to each other.

In the latter part of this scene are introduced the somewhat prosaic, matter-of-fact affairs of state. The charge of Desdemona's father that Othello has enchanted his daughter is to be brought before the Duke for settlement. These affairs of state are the only relief afforded in the play to the accumulated effect of intrigue and disaster.

Act I, Scene iii. The scene before the Duke serves to reveal still further the admirable character of the Moor and to present Desdemona—the strength of her love and her beauty of character. One element is introduced to link it with the final disaster. In the warning of the angered Brabantio to Othello about Desdemona, chance gives to the watchful Iago a weapon to use to advantage later (lines 291–292):

> Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
> She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

The latter part of the scene shows the Roderigo scheme at work, while in a soliloquy Iago succinctly states the purposes and material of the Cassio and Othello intrigues. He aims (1) to harm Othello merely out of hatred, (2) to get Cassio's place, (3) to prove Cassio a knave. By a management that shows a master workman's skill, these three schemes are united into one, and the means to work with are found in (1) Cassio's pleasing personality and manner, (2) Othello's free and open nature, with its glorious but dangerous credulity.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act II, Scene i. The storm suggests the titanic forces at work within the human heart and is an outward expression of the tumultuous emotions that are doomed to shipwreck so many lives. There is something strange and suggestive in the speedy, safe arrival of Iago and Desdemona. Desdemona through sheer innocence is unconscious of the dangerous storms that later will rend Othello's heart—she sees only their outward workings and is seized by a vague fear. Iago delights in watching the opportunities unfold for developing his designs.

The motive to the rising action is supplied when Cassio takes Desdemona's hand and speaks with her in his accustomed, innocently familiar way.

In this scene the Roderigo and Cassio plot are brought together, while Iago still further displays the workings of his mind in the soliloquy with which the scene closes:

> . . . nothing can or shall content my soul
> Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife.

Act II, Scene ii. In accordance with Othello's commands, a herald proclaims a celebration in honor of the destruction of the Turkish fleet and also of his own nuptials, which had been so suddenly interrupted in Venice.

Act II, Scene iii. The celebration introduced in Scene ii gives Iago fresh opportunity to further his designs. Under cover of the revelry he succeeds in getting Cassio drunk against his will and draws him into a quarrel which causes his dismissal from the service of Othello. Thus with extreme ease and swiftness Iago accomplishes one of his purposes. By pretending sympathy for Cassio he can advise him to seek to gain Othello's favor through Desdemona. He sets his trap for both Cassio and Desdemona. This advice to Cassio and his encouragement to Roderigo reveal the next steps in the progress of his plot.

Act III, Scene i. After a momentary relief, afforded by the episode of the Clown and the Musicians, the main action continues. Emilia and the Clown are brought into the rapidly thickening plot. Each new actor is but one more tool for the master Iago. Iago pulls the strings, and like puppets the characters respond to his will, unknowing and helpless.

Act III, Scene ii. State affairs are again referred to, while the appointment between Othello and Iago keeps up the suspense.

Act III, Scene iii, 1–34. Desdemona, Emilia, and Cassio are discussing the possibilities of Cassio's being reinstated in office. At this point there is a perfect balance of the forces in the play. Othello's mind is as yet untainted by suspicion, and Cassio's case has every assurance of success. With the next line comes the turning point, and the balance is disturbed forever.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene iii, 35–279. With the words "Ha, I like not that" the poison of Iago's evil designs infects Othello's soul, and gradually his whole magnanimous being is transformed into an ocean of writhing passion. In his conversation with Iago the Moor's credulity is easily won, and maddening doubts are aroused by the villain's clever dissembling and cautious insinuations.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene iii, 279–468. By chance, Othello brushes aside the handkerchief with which Desdemona tries to bind his aching head; it drops and is forgotten. The sense of inevitable disaster is increased almost intolerably by this simple act —the dropping of a handkerchief. The handkerchief, which

passes swiftly from Emilia to Iago and thence to Othello, is the dramatist's device to bring about Desdemona's undoing. From now on, Iago has only to see to it that the ultimate ends of his intrigue are accomplished by feeding the fire of Othello's passion with torturing reminders of his wife's supposed disloyalty.

Act III, Scene iv. This scene is replete with terrible irony. As Desdemona bemoans the loss of her handkerchief, Emilia asks her if her husband is jealous, and she replies wholeheartedly (lines 30–31):

> Who, he? I think the sun where he was born
> Drew all such humours from him.

This confidence of the unsuspecting and innocent Desdemona serves only to emphasize the simplicity of her character and her love for Othello. The handkerchief again dominates the scene and leaves the audience groping toward the hope that chance may still put it in Desdemona's hand before it is too late.

Act IV, Scene i. Again chance plays favorably for Iago. He is working Othello into a passion of jealousy when, just at the critical moment, the handkerchief is brought into the scene under circumstances which make it easy for the adroit Iago to convert it into the final bit of proof of Desdemona's faithlessness.

Iago's power over Othello is now assured. He throws off the cautious attitude which has characterized his suggestions to his victim, and urges revenge and immediate action. When Othello plans to poison Desdemona, Iago makes bold to say, "Strangle her in her bed."

To relieve the tension, state affairs are introduced. Lodovico comes with a message from Venice commanding the Moor to return and "deputing Cassio in his government."

Act IV, Scene ii. This highly dramatic scene contains Othello's denunciation of Desdemona. After he leaves her,

Iago offers her consolation, saying that this is a momentary passion that will soon wear off.

For the first time a suggestion comes with the swiftly moving events that although fate is not to interpose obstacles to the final success of Iago's intrigue, yet Iago himself may be caught in the whirlpool. This comes as a realization on Roderigo's part that he has spent all his wealth but is no nearer to winning Desdemona's love.

Act IV, Scene iii. Desdemona with pathetic simplicity obeys her husband's commands to dismiss her attendants and go quickly to bed. Even in her unsuspecting trustfulness she feels a vague foreboding, and her thoughts wander backward to her girlhood days. This scene, which somewhat delays the final tragedy, serves not as a relief—as a hope that chance may even at this last hour intervene—it merely deepens the inevitability of the fate that impends.

Act V, Scene i. The final stage is reached in the Cassio and Roderigo intrigue. With the same cleverness that has marked the plans of Iago throughout the play, Roderigo is made to attack Cassio. Iago comes as a rescuer and puts an end to the Roderigo problem by stabbing him to death, apparently to avenge Cassio's injury. Then he dexterously fastens upon Bianca the suspicion of having attacked Cassio.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene ii. The horror of the tragic climax is intensified by the last whisper of Desdemona to her maid—a last pledge of love and loyalty to her husband. Iago's scheme has received its first opposition in Cassio's escape from death, but it is Emilia who reveals the truth. She swears to her mistress's honor. The Roderigo-Cassio scheme is exposed by letters found in the dead man's pocket. Iago is led off to prison; Othello stabs himself, to die on Desdemona's body. (See note, V, ii, 337–342.)

King Lear

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. In *King Lear* the exposition is in the closest conjunction with the complication or rising action. In lines 1–28 all the leading characters, except Edgar and the Fool, are introduced; the two plots and their interaction are prepared for, and the keynote of both Gloucester's character and Lear's is struck. With line 29 and the old king's announcement of his "darker purpose" begins the action of the Lear plot. 'Darker' suggests the atmosphere of the drama. The love test, the division of the kingdom, the disinheritance of Cordelia, and the banishment of Kent determine the issue of the whole action.

Act I, Scene ii. The action of the Gloucester plot begins with the soliloquy in which Edmund shows that, like Richard the Third, he is "determined to prove a villain." He convinces Gloucester by a forgery that Edgar wishes to conspire with him in a plot to kill their father and share his property. Edgar is introduced, and his open-mindedness results in his playing into the hands of his arch-enemy.

Act I, Scene iii—Scene iv, 1–186. Goneril's assumption of authority and her attitude to her father are revealed in her conversation with Oswald, who presents an effective contrast to Kent. Kent disguised enters Lear's service, and Lear pathetically begins to realize the position in which he has placed himself. In his answer to the Knight, iv, 64–68, is given a glimpse of his nobler nature. With the entry of the Fool, the keynote of whose character is struck in lines 69–70, the exposition is complete.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iv, 187–338. The function of the Fool in evolving the plot is noteworthy. His poignant wit unmasks the real Goneril and compels her outburst of passion, which sets in motion the machinery that brings about the final overthrow of Lear's mind and the concluding scenes of devilry and death.

Act I, Scene v. While the Fool is preparing Lear for the way he will be treated by Regan, his sallies touch the old man to the quick. Lear begins to feel remorse for his treatment of Cordelia (line 22), and the tragic note is struck in all its terror in the cry to be saved from madness (lines 42–43). The very jests with which the Fool strives to avert his master's madness coöperate to augment it, fixing his mind on that which is the irritating cause.

Act II, Scene i. The Gloucester plot is developed by Edmund's success in turning his father against Edgar. When Edmund brings Regan and Cornwall to Gloucester's castle, the way is prepared for the union of the two plots. The chief link between the Lear plot and the Gloucester plot is Edmund's association with Regan and Goneril.

Act II, Scene ii. While Regan solicits Gloucester's aid and Cornwall invites Edmund's service, Oswald and Kent fight and Kent is put in the stocks, where, before he sleeps, he intimates that he is in communication with Cordelia.

Act II, Scene iii. Edgar plans to disguise himself as a Bedlam beggar. "His assumed madness serves the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear."—Coleridge.

Act II, Scene iv. Lear's anguish reaches its height when Regan shows herself to be crueler even than Goneril, and with the words "I shall go mad," line 280, he rushes out into a night of wild storm.

Act III, Scene i. The plot is further complicated by the

news communicated by Kent to a friend that France, of which country Cordelia is now queen, has planned an invasion of Britain. The tide begins to turn against Regan and Goneril.

Act III, Scene ii. Lear, the Fool, and Kent are in the storm. Here, as in *Julius Cæsar*, the storm is the dramatic background to the tempest of human passion. The old man appeals from his daughters to the heavens, and the heavens prove as deaf to his call as either Goneril or Regan. Amid the "dreadful pudder," line 45, of the elements, his "wits begin to turn," line 62.

Act III, Scene iii. The Gloucester plot is now closely interwoven with the Lear plot. Gloucester tells Edmund that he intends to aid Lear, and in this confidence he plays unwittingly into the hands of his enemies. The result is that he is suspected of being friendly to France, and the relations between Edmund, Cornwall, and Regan are strengthened.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene iv. In the hovel scene the Lear plot and the Gloucester plot are interwoven as one. Here, to use Aristotle's famous figure, all the elements of interest in main plot and subplot are tightened into a compact knot of general entanglement. Edgar is the victim of the Gloucester plot, and his disguise as a Bedlam beggar is the climax to the tragedy of his own sufferings; contact with the feigned madness of Edgar completes the overthrow of Lear's mind, and, while the storm continues to rumble, the old king begins to tear off his clothes. Gloucester, seeking to save Lear, reaches the hovel, and in his words to Kent, lines 153–157, Edgar learns how his father had been deceived, and his anger against him is turned to pity. The beginning of the resolution in a drama is usually in the closest union with the climax. "From this meeting of the mad Edgar with the mad Lear there springs at once the final stroke in the misery Gloucester suffers from the son he has favored [the attempt to save Lear being betrayed by Edmund, who becomes

thereby the cause of the vengeance which puts out his father's eyes] and the beginning of the forgiving love he is to experience from the son he has wronged."—Moulton.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene v. Edmund's intrigue is successful. He betrays his father to Cornwall, and is made by Cornwall Earl of Gloucester. The development of the action up to this point in the drama has been masterly. With the resolution, or falling action, there is a slackening of the emotional tension until the scenes immediately before the dénouement. All through the resolution Edmund and Edgar are prominent in the working out of the causes and conditions which are to bring about the catastrophe.

Act III, Scene vi. While Lear in his madness arraigns Regan and Goneril in an imaginary trial, with Edgar and the Fool as judges, Gloucester prepares to send him in a litter on the way to Dover to meet Cordelia.

Act III, Scene vii. Gloucester, betrayed by Edmund, is brought before Cornwall and Regan. He is "pinioned like a thief," and Regan hears from his lips the first condemnation of her atrocious cruelty to her father. Stung by his reproaches, Cornwall gives orders for his eyes to be put out. In his agony Gloucester calls upon Edmund to avenge him, and he learns from Regan in a bitter speech that it is Edmund who has brought him to this pass. Cornwall receives a deathblow from a servant's sword.

Act IV, Scene i. The wronged Edgar lovingly tends his blind father on the way to Dover, and his tender regard is like that of Cordelia for Lear. From now on the place of Gloucester, who has acted as a link between the two plots, is taken by Edmund, whose story becomes one with that of Regan and Goneril.

Act IV, Scene ii. The success of Edmund's intrigue is entangling him in a relation which will be the nemesis to punish him. The adulterous love of Goneril for Edmund is resented by Albany.

Act IV, Scene iii. This scene, omitted in the Folios, is in dramatic contrast to the preceding. In a conversation between Kent and a Gentleman is revealed the solicitude with which Cordelia had learned of the treatment to which her father had been subjected.

Act IV, Scene iv. With drum and colors and attended by soldiers, indicating her rank as queen and the military preparations in progress, Cordelia reënters upon the scene. In conversation with a doctor she gives a wonderful word picture of Lear, who, "mad as the vex'd sea," line 2, has wandered away, crowned, like Ophelia, with wild flowers.

Act IV, Scene v. Goneril and the widowed Regan are rivals for the affection of Edmund. Regan tries to induce Oswald to betray his mistress, but in vain. One element in the catastrophe is plainly foreshadowed.

Act IV, Scene vi. This long scene is crowded with action. Edgar persuades his father that, though he threw himself over Dover cliff, he has been miraculously preserved. Lear in his insane wandering encounters Gloucester, led by Edgar, and the two hapless old sufferers talk until Lear is found by the attendants sent in search of him. Gloucester is then attacked by Oswald, who hopes to win high reward by killing him; but Edgar interposes, and Oswald is killed. On his body Edgar finds a letter from Goneril to Edmund proposing that he kill Albany and marry her. He plans to inform the "death-practis'd duke."

Act IV, Scene vii. In all his great tragedies, with the notable exception of *Othello*, when the forces of the resolution, or falling action, are gathering towards the dénouement, Shakespeare introduces a scene which appeals to an emotion different from any of those excited elsewhere in the play. "As a rule this new

emotion is pathetic; and the pathos is not terrible or lacerating, but, even if painful, is accompanied by the sense of beauty and by an outflow of admiration or affection, which come with an inexpressible sweetness after the tension of the crisis and the first counter-stroke. So it is with the reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius, and the arrival of the news of Portia's death. The most famous instance of this effect is the scene where Lear wakes from sleep and finds Cordelia bending over him, perhaps the most tear-compelling passage in literature."—Bradley.

Act V, Scene i. The action now falls rapidly to the dénouement. Interest in the preparations by Edmund and Albany for the impending battle with the French army is subordinated to the interest in the bitter division between Regan and Goneril caused by jealousy of Edmund. Edgar, disguised, brings Goneril's treacherous letter to Albany, and arranges that, if Cordelia loses, he should call for a champion to challenge Edmund.

Act V, Scene ii. Between military alarums Edgar takes farewell of Gloucester. Lear and Cordelia are taken prisoners. The insignificance of this battle as compared with the corresponding battles in *Julius Cæsar* and *Macbeth* is due partly to the dramatic necessity for concentrating attention on the main interest of the plot, and partly to the fact that while the play calls for sympathy with Lear and Cordelia, Elizabethan patriotism demanded that the British forces win, and in these circumstances the more meagre the description the better (see note, V, ii, 5).

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iii. The action of the dénouement is swift and marvelously concentrated. The results of all the varied actions are gathered up in 326 lines, where every word tells. All the leading characters of the opening scene gather to receive the

reward of their deeds. It is the sudden reaping of a terrible sowing. Albany demands the release of Cordelia and Lear, and Edmund refuses to give them up. The quarrel that ensues shows to what an insane length had gone the indecent rivalry of Regan and Goneril over Edmund. Regan, given poison by her sister, dies horribly. Albany taunts his wife with the incriminating letter, charges Edmund with treason, and calls for the champion. Edgar enters the lists, and Edmund falls. Goneril stabs herself to death, and, while Edgar hastens to save the prisoners, Lear totters on the scene with murdered Cordelia in his arms and, in a wild burst of grief over her, dies. The wheel, indeed, is come full circle. The "darker purpose" of the opening scene has brought about this holocaust. Mortals are punished for their mistakes as well as for their crimes, and the innocent are overwhelmed in the disasters wrought by fools and knaves.

Macbeth

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The Witches are introduced in a desert place to the accompaniment of a storm in the physical world. The keynote of high tragic drama is struck at once. Like a prologue this brief scene foreshadows the moral and cosmic significance of an impending struggle in which Macbeth is involved (line 7).

Act I, Scene ii. Interest in Macbeth before he appears is deepened by narratives of his personal courage and military prowess. His success in battle with rebellion and invasion wins the favor of the king, who bestows on him in absence the title forfeited by the treacherous thane of Cawdor. This gift becomes an impulse towards Macbeth's own criminal 'enterprise' (cf. I, vii, 48) and carries with it a foreboding of his own treason (cf. I, iii, 116–117).

Act I, Scene iii, 1–47. With the introduction of Macbeth the dramatic exposition is complete. For the significance of Macbeth's first words, see note, line 38.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iii, 47–156. The greetings of the Witches furnish the exciting force of the drama, and the complication, or rising action, begins. The 'supernatural soliciting' (line 130) stimulates the guilty brooding of Macbeth; he mutters to himself of 'horrible imaginings' (line 138) and murder; and this, the temptation scene, closes with his determination to seek the king.

Act I, Scene iv. The king's announcement that Malcolm will be his successor determines in a general way Macbeth's 'black and deep desires' (line 51). The king resolves to honor Macbeth by a visit to his castle. The way is prepared for a line of action by Macbeth and for the introduction of Lady Macbeth. The king's graciousness and trust are in ironical contrast to Macbeth's dark hopes and sinister designs (cf. note, lines 13–14).

Act I, Scene v. In her quivering ambition for her husband's advancement, Lady Macbeth sees in the king's visit a chance "to catch the nearest way" (line 16). She starts Macbeth's treacherous purposes into a course of immediate action, and 'this night's great business' (line 66) is outlined ominously. The nervous tension of her soliloquy (lines 36–42) prepares for the effects of the reaction as revealed in V, i.

Act I, Scene vi. Dramatic irony and the irony of situation (cf. note, I, iv, 13–14) prevail in this brief scene (cf. notes, I, vi, 1–3, 20). The castle, with its air of peace and security, is a death trap; the gracious mistress is an instigator of treason and murder.

Act I, Scene vii. Macbeth's soliloquy, with its vision of the evil consequences of the bloody deed, foreshadows all that

comes in the falling action of the play. His faltering calls forth the energy and spirit of Lady Macbeth, who nerves him to the deed.

Act II, Scene i. The scene opens in an atmosphere of agitation and dread. Banquo's anxiety expresses itself in short, tense sentences relating to the time of night (cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 1–14). In a few words with Macbeth he shows that his suspicions are awakened. Left alone, Macbeth has a vision of a bloody dagger, and then the bell, Lady Macbeth's signal for the murder, sounds.

Act II, Scene ii. As often in Greek tragedy, the murder is not presented on the stage, but it is suggested with all the accessories of horror in Lady Macbeth's soliloquy and her comments to Macbeth when he returns. Her strength of mind and her self-control come not from heartlessness but from a will steeled to help her husband. Before the scene closes the guilty pair are startled by a knocking at the gate; and it is dramatically effective that one of the men knocking is the destined instrument of vengeance (cf. note, line 57).

Act II, Scene iii. The humorous soliloquy in prose with which the scene opens is a notable example of dramatic contrast. The realism and verisimilitude suggest how abnormal the conditions are through which the action has been passing. In the mechanism of stage production this interlude allows Macbeth and Lady Macbeth time to prepare for the discovery of the murder. When Macduff raises the alarm, Macbeth rushes in and rashly murders the drugged grooms, who were to be charged with the king's death, and thus he ruins the original plan made by Lady Macbeth. She swoons when she hears what he has done (cf. note, line 112). The king's sons suspect Macbeth and take refuge in flight.

Act II, Scene iv. After the rush of tragic incident this calm scene gives relief and perspective. In quiet talk, as in a Chorus speech, the immediate after effects of the occurrences are re-

vealed. The flight of the king's sons has put "upon them suspicion of the deed" (lines 26–27); Macbeth has "gone to Scone to be invested" (lines 31–32) as king.

Act III, Scene i. In an opening soliloquy Banquo makes clear the menace he is to Macbeth and thus motives his own death. He holds the threads which connect Macbeth with the murder of Duncan; the Witches prophesied that his own offspring should sit on the throne. Macbeth reveals his uneasiness, and, to end the torture of suspense, hastily arranges for the 'taking off' of Banquo and his son.

Act III, Scene ii. Lady Macbeth begins to feel remorse. "Nought's had, all's spent" (line 4) is a note of deepest melancholy. Her husband is less with her than before; the copartnership of guilt is breaking up. She conceals her feelings when Macbeth appears, flushed with his new scheme of murder. He hints of a 'deed of dreadful note' (line 44) that is to be done that night. This half confidence enables her to play her part in the crisis of the banquet scene.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene iii, 1–18. Banquo is murdered, and this murder marks the height of Macbeth's success. From the entrance of the exciting force in his interview with the Witches until now the action has been a steady rise for him in power and reach.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene iii, 19–22. With the escape of Fleance begins the falling action of the drama. Though he is not used again as an agent, his escape symbolizes the turn of Macbeth's fortune. Macbeth's doom now darkens down, scene by scene, to the dénouement.

Act III, Scene iv. That "Fleance is scap'd" is told to Macbeth as the banquet scene opens. He is uneasy, and for him at the feast the apparition of murdered Banquo becomes the handwriting on the wall. Superstitious terrors entangle him; he "will to-morrow . . . to the weird sisters" (lines 133–134). Macduff's absence from the banquet is referred to as significant.

Act III, Scene v. In the rising action Macbeth entered into alliance with the Witches and profited by their patronage; in the falling action, under Hecate, they contrive his ruin.

Act III, Scene vi. This quiet side-scene, like a Chorus speech (cf. II, iv), supplies comment and bridges an interval of time. Macbeth's conduct as king is making him suspected and detested in Scotland. Macduff has fled to England.

Act IV, Scene i. Macbeth meets the Witches for the second time. As before, they act as an exciting force. The repetition suggests the inevitableness of destiny. The suggestions and ambiguous oracles of the Witches first soothe Macbeth and then irritate him. His rapid moral deterioration is shown in the purposeless savagery of his scheme to massacre Macduff's wife and family.

Act IV, Scene ii. The scene has dramatic relief in the sweetness, humor, and pathos of the dialogue between Lady Macduff and her little son. The domestic calm is broken in on by the murderers. This wanton crime becomes the exciting cause of the dramatic catastrophe. It causes revolt in Scotland; it awakes Malcolm and Macduff to immediate revenge.

Act IV, Scene iii. This long scene has been censured for its 'dragging' tendency; but the slow movement represents the steady gathering of the forces, moral and material, which are about to overwhelm Macbeth. It marks the pause before the storm. When the news of his loss comes to Macduff, the emotion of tenderness and pathos, touched in the preceding scene, is intensified. For an explanation of the seemingly irrelevant passage on 'the evil,' see note, lines 146–159.

Act V, Scene i. Lady Macbeth's brooding remorse (cf. III, ii) has deepened into the melancholy of a disordered brain. In her delirium she reproduces the murder of Duncan, and though she has drifted apart from her husband into a solitude of guilty fears, she mingles his actions with her own, as she lays bare her soul. Her memories and imaginings are eating away her life; her death "by self and violent hands" (V, viii, 70) is foreshadowed.

Act V, Scene ii. The action of the drama now oscillates between the opposing forces and Macbeth. In this scene the Scottish nobles and their followers gather to join Malcolm and the English army. They "march towards Birnam" (line 31).

Act V, Scene iii. Macbeth learns of the forces arrayed against him, and he is told that Lady Macbeth is ill. As he expresses his sense of utter loneliness, he awakens the pity due to a hero of tragedy. Then his old personal courage blazes up in the presence of pressing danger.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iv. As the Scottish and English soldiers march through Birnam wood, they lop boughs and carry them to confuse the enemy. Thus begins the fulfillment of a prediction deemed by Macbeth impossible (IV, i, 92–100).

Act V, Scene v. Macbeth learns that Birnam wood is moving to Dunsinane, and 'the cry of women' (line 8) tells him that Lady Macbeth is dead. Again the pathos and the poetry of his intensely human cry awaken pity without interfering with the rigorous requirements of moral law.

Act V, Scene vi. This prelude to the battle reveals the spirit of the opposing forces. Battle representations were popular in the Elizabethan theatre, and the stage conditions account in great measure for such short, typical scenes as this and the two which follow.

Act V, Scene vii. Macbeth, with hope in the prediction that "none of woman born shall harm" him (IV, i, 80–81), fights bravely against desperate odds (cf. note, line 2).

Act V, Scene viii. Despising a temptation to commit suicide, Macbeth fights on. The discovery that he has been tricked a second time by an ambiguous oracle of the 'juggling fiends' (line 19), and that they have paltered with him 'in a double sense' (line 20), unnerves him for a moment, but he recovers himself and goes to his doom with a speech that rings of heroic freedom and satisfies the demands of high tragedy.

Coriolanus

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The first three scenes form an introduction to the play as a whole. *Coriolanus* is a tragedy of a human soul, and it is necessary to its success that the central figure be at first pictured with the light full on his strong features, and the defects untouched or barely suggested. The keynote of the struggle is sounded even in the opening lines, when one of the rabble says to his companions, "First, you know Caius Martius is chief enemy to the people" (line 7). It is this assumption on the part, first of the common people, and later of the senators, that enmity exists between them and Coriolanus that makes inevitable the continuous misunderstanding and final disaster. The first scene foreshadows not only the supreme struggle between Coriolanus and his fate but the lesser although historically more significant struggle between the rulers and the ruled. Only conflict and tragedy can come from the personal material presented here. Coriolanus is not made to appear until line 158, when the audience has been fully acquainted with the necessary facts.

Act I, Scene ii. As an important element in the dramatic exposition, Aufidius is introduced and preparation is made for the part he plays in the entanglements of the rising action. The keynote of 'enmity' is again heard when Coriolanus is named as the 'old enemy' (line 12) of Aufidius. Attention is called to the external wars which are engrossing Rome and have such an important part to play later in the falling action of the tragedy.

Act I, Scene iii. Now that the central character and his chief opponents have been introduced, it remains for this last of the introductory scenes to bring forward Volumnia, who is so necessary to a complete picture of the hero and to the sequel of the plot. This domestic scene in which both Virgilia and her son also appear, relieves the tension already created by the statement of the internal and external troubles impending.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scenes iv–x. In the threatened attacks on Rome by the Volsces, Coriolanus stands out as the champion of the city. He is now the ideal hero that wrings only wonder and fervent praise from the timorous souls. In Homeric fashion he meets the leader of the enemy's forces in single combat, and becomes the idol of Rome. By thus building up a heroic-sized figure, the dramatist has prepared the way for making the succeeding mistakes and misunderstandings which entangle Coriolanus and finally drag him down to ruin seem the very essence of tragedy. Aufidius is again shown as a growing rival, and the complication is tightened.

Act II, Scene i. In the second act the complication of the drama is greatly advanced, for at once the weaknesses which have heretofore been only suggested are seen in the glare of full light. Coriolanus lacks that tolerant sympathy for the common people which marks all truly great leaders, and this

together with his overweening pride are the rocks on which he is wrecked. This scene looks both backward and forward: it reveals conditions in Rome and anticipates new interests. By contrasting the welcome which Coriolanus receives from the patricians with that given him by the plebeians, Shakespeare is reminding his audience that this is a conflict not only of an individual with his weaknesses but of class with class.

Act II, Scene ii. Up to this point the strongest feelings exposed have been those of jealousy and active enmity towards Coriolanus. Now that his success against the Volsces has made him the popular hero, he is at a turning of the ways. This dramatic opportunity fully to retrieve a safe place in the hearts of the people is not seized by him, and the full significance of the complication is revealed.

Act II, Scene iii. Now is accomplished what has been foreshadowed—Coriolanus is tested and fails. The plebeians, so susceptible to chance moods, are completely alienated by his haughtiness and irony, and the action is hastened when they submit to the suggestions of the intriguing tribunes.

Act III, Scene i. The action is rapid. The way has been fully prepared by preceding events for all that is to follow. One political blunder after another on the part of Coriolanus in dealing with the people gives to this scene the complexion of tragedy itself. Now that all classes are turned against Coriolanus in open hostility, the complication is almost complete.

Act III, Scene ii. A powerful factor in the emotional interest of the drama appears for the second time. Volumnia's influence on both the future of Rome and the character of her son prepares for that dramatic scene in the falling action (V, iii) in which the mother triumphs and Rome is saved.

Act III, Scene iii, 1–86. The element of suspense is introduced, and again opportunity is given Coriolanus to retrieve his blunders. In this new failure to measure up to heroic size the dramatic complication is complete.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene iii, 87–143. Coriolanus fails to take the tide "at the flood," and his career in Rome comes to a disastrous close. This forms the crisis of the play.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act IV, Scene i. Even in his failures Coriolanus is made to retain the eager sympathy of the audience because of the unjust accusations brought against him. And in showing him here as son, husband, and father as well as defeated political leader, the dramatist wins fresh sympathy to his side.

Act IV, Scene ii. This scene is a bit of effective contrast such as only Shakespeare knew how to give. The pride and righteous indignation of Volumnia are shown against the insincerity and cowardice of the tribunes.

Act IV, Scenes iii–iv. Again the external affairs of Rome are forced into prominence, and in the threatened attack of the Volsces on Rome and in the alliance of Coriolanus with Aufidius, the enemy of Rome, the way is opened for the final disaster. There is still, however, so much of purpose and strength in Coriolanus that both sympathy and interest are still centered in him.

Act IV, Scene v. The first step that leads to the final undoing of Coriolanus is taken. Again a certain element of suspense is introduced in the reconciliation effected between sworn enemies. The audience wonders and doubts, then turns expectantly to succeeding events, hoping to find their fears unfounded.

Act IV, Scene vi. As a piece of stage business this scene is most effective, for the audience already knows what is about to befall Rome. The disaster that threatens the tribunes suggests a dénouement eagerly wished for.

Act IV, Scene vii. The resolution is advanced, and the ultimate failure forecasted in the reawakening of jealousy between Aufidius and Coriolanus.

Act V, Scenes i–ii. By picturing the consternation in Rome, and the unsuccessful attempt of Menenius and Cominius to shake Coriolanus from his purpose of destroying the city, a fitting background has been made for the dramatic meeting of the vanquished son and his mother.

Act V, Scene iii. This is the most dramatic and the finest scene of the play. The clash between two strong spirits, and the strength and dignity of the combatants—Coriolanus and Volumnia—intensify the tragic emotion.

Act V, Scenes iv–v. The change in Rome from despair to rejoicing emphasizes the mother's triumph and the son's defeat.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene vi. Coriolanus has failed, yet so great has been the sympathy aroused in his behalf, even in the midst of the catastrophe that his sins of haughtiness and prejudice have brought upon him, that the audience is scarcely ready to meet the only solution of the tragic tangle—his violent death.

The Tempest

ANALYSIS BY ACT AND SCENE

I. The Exposition, or Introduction

Act I, Scene i. Different stages of a shipwreck are indicated realistically in dialogue. Characterization is marked in the brief speeches of Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo.

Act I, Scene ii, 1–374. From the real world the action passes into the realm of enchantment. In the opening speech Miranda describes the shipwreck as seen from the shore of the

enchanted island, and in talk with her Prospero unfolds his past history and the past history of the island. This part of the scene has the effect of a classical prologue. Ariel and Caliban are introduced, and the exposition closes with the entrance of Ferdinand as Ariel sings, "Come unto these yellow sands."

II. The Complication, or Rising Action

Act I, Scene ii, 375–502. Ferdinand and Miranda love at first sight, and Prospero interrupts the idyllic love-making. The dénouement is foreshadowed; so also are the obstacles and complications.

Act II, Scene i. The scene begins with Gonzalo's serious speech of consolation and passes into humorous dialogue and the description of the ideal commonwealth. As Alonso and other members of the shipwrecked group sleep, overcome by magic, Antonio and Sebastian plot against the king's life. Ariel frustrates the plot, and advance is made in Prospero's plan to countercheck his enemies.

Act II, Scene ii. The complication is further developed in the comic subplot of the alliance between Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano.

Act III, Scene i. Ferdinand and Miranda plight their troth.

Act III, Scene ii. The alliance between Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano develops into a plot against Prospero's life.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point

Act III, Scene iii. The climax of the main motive comes when Antonio and Sebastian and Alonso, whom they are still plotting to kill, are bidden to a magic banquet prepared for them by Prospero. The banquet vanishes in thunder and lightning, and Ariel warns the "three men of sin" of their doom.

IV. The Resolution, or Falling Action

Act IV, Scene i. Prospero recognizes the marriage contract between Ferdinand and Miranda, and a Masque is 'presented' to celebrate the betrothal. After Prospero utters the farewell to his actors, Ariel enters with news of the collapse of the Caliban plot.

Act V, Scene i, 1–171. Prospero has now all his enemies in his power, and when Ariel 'discases' him of his magic robes and gives him the hat and rapier which he wore when Duke of Milan, he makes his identity known.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion

Act V, Scene i, 172–Epilogue. The dénouement comes when Ferdinand and Miranda are 'discovered' playing chess, and Alonso realizes that his son is alive and betrothed to Prospero's daughter. The drama closes calmly in universal forgiveness and the 'restitution of all things.'